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THE EXPLORER AS HERO: *LE FIDÈLE APATOU* IN
THE FRENCH WILDERNESS

For a brief spell during the closing years of the nineteenth century, a South American Maroon named Apatu became the toast of France, at least that portion of the French public that thrilled to the pages of *Le Tour du Monde*, a popular adventure series that inspired the likes of Jules Verne.¹ Hailing from the borderlands between French and Dutch Guiana, a part of the Amazon basin that was still only nominally under the control of the two competing European powers that had laid claim to the area, Apatu had joined forces with the French explorer Jules Crevaux. In doing so, he had caused alarm among his own people, the Aluku, who continued to regard whites with great suspicion. Over a period of several months, Crevaux and Apatu had penetrated rivers and forests that had yet to appear on European maps; by the time they arrived at the mouth of the Amazon River in Brazil, they had also cemented a friendship that was to bring them together for a number of other journeys over the next few years, a friendship that would last until Crevaux's death in 1882.² By Crevaux's own account, Apatu had not only

1. An earlier version of this article was presented at the 101st meeting of the American Anthropological Association in New Orleans in November 2002, in a session titled "Old Colonies, New Post-Colonies: The French West Indies and the End of Postcolonial Theory." The field research on which it is partially based received support at various points from the Fulbright-Hays program, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, the (U.S.) National Science Foundation, the Smithsonian Institution, and the (U.S.) National Endowment for the Humanities, for which I remain grateful. I would also like to express my appreciation to Anne-Marie Bruleaux, Wim Hoogbergen, and the late Ben Scholtens for sharing archival documents that contributed insights to this paper, and to Richard Price for commenting on an earlier draft.

2. In all, Crevaux and Apatu traversed approximately 12,000 kilometers in their travels together, visiting parts of French Guiana, Dutch Guiana, Brazil, France, Colombia, Venezuela, and Trinidad over a period spanning roughly five years. Apatu deserves credit

proven indispensable as his chief navigator, but had risked his life more than once on Crevaux's behalf.³ His skills as a navigator and his knowledge of the forest had also saved Crevaux's life on more than one occasion (Crevaux 1987:136; Crevaux 1989:68-69, 78-79). Through Crevaux's writings, readers in Paris came to know the courageous Maroon as *le fidèle Apatou*, faithful Apatu. When Crevaux invited Apatu to join him again on his second journey into the Guianese interior, the latter agreed, but under one condition: that the explorer would take him to France once their voyage was over. "You've seen my country," said Apatu. "I want to see yours" (Crevaux 1987:178).⁴ It was a promise that Crevaux kept.

I have yet to find a detailed written account of Apatu's travels in France, but I have heard several oral accounts from present-day Aluku Maroons. Here's part of one, recorded in 1986, roughly a century after the fact:

They were sleeping on the raft. They had already come to the sea, and they saw a ship. And Apatu took off a piece of his clothing, put it on a stick, and started waving it. He was waving it and waving it, until the sailors on the ship saw. They came over to them, and stopped the ship. They went onto the ship. [The sailors] saw Teevo [Crevaux].⁵ He and the other whites already knew each other – you know how white people are with other white people. Then they brought them to France. The white man traveled with Apatu until they came to the part of the country where he lived, and he brought Apatu to his house. They were there until the other white men started coming to take a look at Apatu. They hadn't known any black people before – the black people from here. They came to look Apatu up and down, all the way up to his head. They were scraping him to see if [the black would come off and] he would turn white. That's the story we've been given.

Well, they kept on coming there. Then [Crevaux] said to them, "well, the way Apatu and I traveled, we didn't have guns, but with that bow that he has, he would kill tapirs, he'd kill jaguars, he'd kill anything that was dangerous with that bow."

Then the whites said they were going to make a bet. They would put a bull on a field for Apatu, to see if he could kill it with a bow. Because they

along with Crevaux for being one of the first visitors from outside to explore major portions of both the Amazon and Orinoco basins (Crevaux 1987, 1989).

3. In Crevaux's own words: "The Aluku Negro Apatu, led by the desire to see the great Amazon River, driven by the pride of making a voyage that none of his companions had dared to undertake, risked his life more than once to ensure the success of my mission" (Crevaux 1879:709).

4. Translations of Crevaux, and Anonymous 1993, Bellardie, Benoit, Brunetti, Coudreau, Hurault, Scholtens, Simon, and Vaillant are mine, as are translations of Aluku oral narratives.

5. In Aluku oral accounts, Crevaux is sometimes referred to as "Dokute Teevo" or "Data Teevo" (meaning "Dr. Crevaux"), which accurately reflects the French explorer's credentials: Crevaux bore the official title of *Médecin de 1ère classe de la marine* (Crevaux 1879:726).

didn't believe that he could kill a tapir or stop a bull [with just a bow and arrow].

The white man [Crevaux] said that Apatu would kill it.

The others said, "no way."

This one said, "he can't," the other one said, "he can't."

They talked about it for a while, until [Crevaux] said, "well, I'll go over to him. I'll let you know what he says to me."

His white man went over to him and said, "well, Apatu, those men are challenging you. They say they'll put a bull on a field for you tomorrow at twelve o'clock. If you're able to shoot and kill it, it'll mean millions. Because the people who are betting have put down a lot of money."

Then he said, "okay, well I'll kill the bull."

He [Crevaux] said, "Apatu, will you be able to kill it?"

He said, "ha!... that silly thing? I'll kill it."

He said, "okay."

They were there until it was time. [Crevaux] came to pick him up in a vehicle, and they left.

They tethered the bull in the field. The white people were sitting down "bolou"! They say that when he looked, there were white people as far as he could see, all the way into the city. They arrived. Apatu took his bow and got it ready. He stood up with it until he was nice and ready. He walked over, "tya, tya, tya." The bull was still there. He shot it "tyou"! The bull fell down "brou!" It was dead.

[Then all the white people applauded]: "Oui, Apatou! Oui, Apatou! Oui, Apatou! Oui, Apatou!"

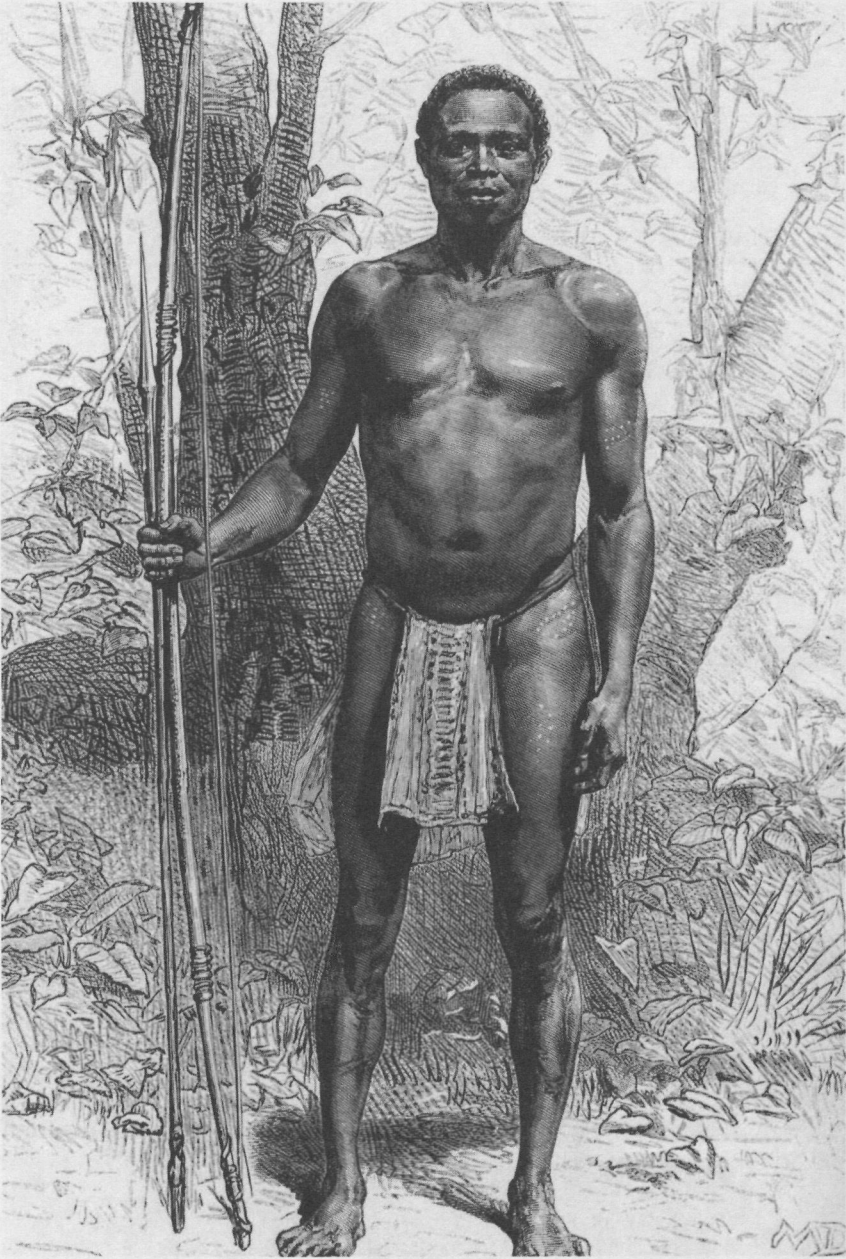
Even the whites said so. They clapped their hands, "wala wala wala." They came and shook his hand, put him in a vehicle, and brought him home. He'd already won.

And when it was time, he said he wanted to go back to his country. Then the white man brought him back to Cayenne, and from Cayenne to Saint-Laurent. At that time there were no airplanes, only ships. He got off at Saint-Laurent, and took a boat to where they'd made a village for him called Apatu, below the Hermina Falls. He was there, and the whites said that if he wanted to make his camp, his village, then he could make his village there. Then he made his village there. The whites were helping him, paying people to establish the place. And so you see he made a village there. He was there for a while, until he went upriver to the Aluku Maroon country, to talk with his family, telling them that he was making a village down there. And one by one, his sisters went downriver [to visit him], planning to go back and forth. But they stayed, until the village of Apatu grew big, like how you see it today. That's how the story goes.⁶

A shorter version of the same story was told to me by another Aluku oral historian a few years later, in 1991:

When they went over there [to France], his white man [Crevaux] said, "I have a man here, and he's as good as a [white] officer. The man is here

6. Narrated by Kapiten Tobu (Charles Cazal), Komontibo, French Guiana, January 11, 1986.



Apatu with his bow and arrow (from Crevaux 1987)

with his bow. He can kill that bull there, because he's killed many things – jaguars, all sorts of things.

They [the whites] said, "it's a lie."

Then they tethered the bull. A [white] soldier shot at it [with a gun]. He missed it. He didn't shoot it in the right place.

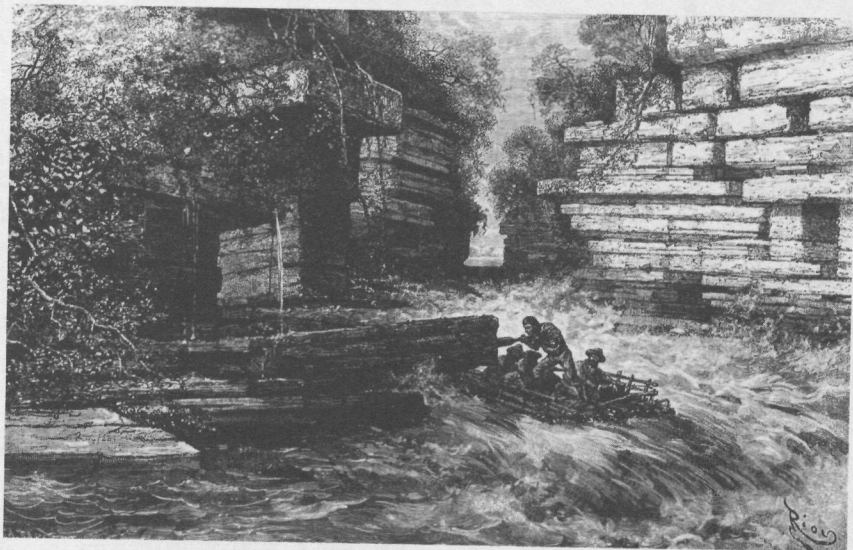
Then they tethered another one. [Apatu] shot it right here. Right here (pointing to his neck, just below the ears) he shot the bull with the arrow. The moment he shot it – "tjak!" – the bull's knees buckled, "vlou!" It was stone dead.

They lifted [Apatu] and brought him on their shoulders all the way to the house. When they finished talking it over, they gave him four medals. They said he was better than an officer. They hadn't thought so at first. But when he came, they started saying this. He'd gained their respect.⁷

For the Aluku Maroons who narrated these stories, and for others who tell similar accounts, the most remarkable thing about Apatu is not that he was unusually strong and courageous – though all agree that he was – but that, long before any other of his people, he crossed the ocean and began to learn the ways of the French. He was the trailblazer, the first Aluku to explore the possibilities and meanings of becoming "French," a path of no return down which most of the rest of his people have since plunged headlong. Apatu's exploits as an explorer of Frenchness, and later as a mediator and proselytizer for the French, helped spread his fame beyond his own people. Even the Saramaka Maroons in Suriname, though they inhabited a Dutch colony, told tales of Apatu's bravery and his knowledge of the whites, stories that emphasized the special role he played in forging relations with the French. In the late 1920s, while sharing stories with Melville Herskovits, the paramount chief of the Saramaka, Djankuso, went so far as to claim Apatu as one of his own. According to Djankuso, Apatu was not only a Saramaka, but also a member of his very own clan.⁸ Though belonging to the Saramaka Matjau clan, Djankuso told Herskovits, Apatu "swore friendship with the Aluku people and went over to the French nationality and later tried to get the Granman's people to become French." "Did you ever hear about Captain Apatu?" asked the paramount chief (Herskovits & Herskovits 1934:257).

7. Narrated by Kapiten Topo (Louis Topo), Maripasoula, French Guiana, December 16, 1991.

8. Djankuso's claim that Apatu was a Saramaka may represent a kind of acknowledgment of the fact that this famous Aluku always had good relations with the Saramaka people. Saramaka boatmen plying the Maroni River during the late nineteenth-century gold rush found that they were welcome in the new village of Motende (also known as Apatou) established by Apatu in the downriver region in the early 1880s. By the time the explorer Henri Coudreau visited the village in 1887, there were already a number of Saramakas living there (Coudreau 1888:456). Since that time, there has been a continuous Saramaka presence in Motende. Today, because Saramaka men have been fathering children there for more than a century, many Alukus from this community can claim partial Saramaka descent.



Apatu saving Crevaux and his crew on the Rio Guaviare
(from Crevaux 1989)



Apatu saving Crevaux from an attack by the Carijona Indians
(from Crevaux 1987)

He lived not so long ago. He was a man without fear. The French sent him to Pali (Paris) and wrote down in their white man's books that he was a great man. I will tell you his story ... Apatu was a clever man. We say knowledge is not *wisi*, to want to know is not sorcery. But sometimes, when a man knows much, he has enemies, and trouble comes to him. This happened to Apatu. People on the river said he was a *wisiman*. He said to the people, when they drove him away and cursed him, he said, "Give me one fig banana, and I will go. If I am guilty of witchcraft, let the whites catch me, and kill me."⁹ He wore one obia on his arm which Tata Boni gave him. Tata Boni was a great obia man. He could walk on the water.

With this obia, and unafraid, Apatu went. He reached the French shore, and found work. Years later he was asked to guide an expedition against the Indians. They came to a cave. At the other end of it Indians waited with their poisoned arrows.

The French officer said to him, "Apatu, are you afraid?"

"I will go, I am not afraid of death," Apatu said to the officer.

He led the way through the cave, calling out, "Mafi, Yanku na'a, hi!"

Three times the Indians tried to shoot him, and each time they failed.¹⁰

The French officer gave Apatu a gold piece for saving his life. That was when they sent him to Pali, and it was written down that he was a great man. (Herskovits & Herskovits 1934:257-58)

The written documentation on Apatu's visit to Paris is sparse. Crevaux himself mentions a few incidental bits and pieces of information: among Apatu's experiences was a visit to the Museum of Paris, where he viewed a collection

9. This Saramaka story is entirely consistent with oral traditions told by the Aluku themselves about accusations of sorcery against Apatu, as we shall see.

10. Stories about a treacherous cave, a huge fluvial cavern with rapids and waterfalls, through which Crevaux and Apatu had to maneuver their raft, also play a prominent part in Aluku oral traditions about the duo's epic voyages of exploration. As in the Saramaka version told by Djankuso to Herskovits, Crevaux and Apatu, in some Aluku accounts, encounter dangerous Amerindians in or near this cave. These stories are almost certainly related to one (or both) of two episodes described by Crevaux in his writings. The first took place during the duo's voyage along the Ica and Japurá Rivers in the Colombian/Brazilian borderlands in 1879. Coming upon an impassable stretch of the Japurá, including the Cuemani and Araracuara rapids, where the river plunged over a thirty-meter abyss after passing through a steep canyon with sides that "looked like walls raised by giants," Crevaux and Apatu were forced to seek an alternate route over land. Over the next few days, they experienced a number of tense and near-fatal encounters with Makuxi (Huitoto) and Carijona Indians (Crevaux 1987:392-99). The second incident occurred during their final voyage, which took them from the foothills of the Andes to the Orinoco basin in 1881. On the Rio Guaviare, they found themselves with no option but to run their raft through a narrow, turbulent gorge that turned out to be much more difficult than expected. According to Crevaux, the enormous gorge was some two kilometers long, with sheer rock walls forty meters high. They nearly lost their raft and everything on it several times in the raging waters. At one point they were swept irresistibly toward an

of tropical insects; during the coldest part of the Parisian winter, the cicatrizations on his skin swelled up, causing him discomfort (Crevaux 1987: 179, 311). We know, in any case, that Apatou received special treatment while in France, being accorded several official honors in recognition of his loyal service to Crevaux. Among the awards bestowed upon him was a gold medal from the Société de Géographie (Coudreau 1893:6; Hurault 1960:133; Bellardie 1994:75). According to one source, "during his visit to France, Apatu was given a grand reception, and in Paris had breakfast with the Prime Minister" (Scholtens 1994:72). Another author states that Apatu toured a number of major cities in France, and attended many conferences, where "he was almost as much of a hero as Crevaux himself" (Coudreau 1893:6; see also Brunetti 1890:67). On one of these occasions he received a medal of honor from the French Minister of the Interior (Coudreau 1893:6).¹¹

We also know from both oral and archival sources that, in return for his faithful service, Apatu eventually received from the French government a substantial land grant in the coastal region, near the settlement of Saint-Laurent, the heart of the expanding penal colony that for the outside world was soon to become synonymous with French Guiana. In 1882, Apatu departed for the coast, and in 1885 he received permission from the colonial government to establish a new Aluku village in this downriver location, more than 200 miles from the rest of the Aluku population (Bellardie 1997:100).¹² Gradually he

overhanging rock, and were about to be crushed or knocked into the water, which would have meant certain death. Apatu came to the rescue. "Planting his pole right on the rock," writes Crevaux, "with a desperate, superhuman movement, he sent us clear of it. We were saved!" (see illustration). A few days later, after a harrowing episode in which Apatu was attacked and almost drowned by a gigantic crocodile, they found themselves in another, similar rock chasm; once again, they were nearly killed as the rushing waters carried them toward another overhang. According to Crevaux, "Apatu, who despite the discomfort caused him by the wound [inflicted by the crocodile] had again taken over as navigator for this difficult passage, rescued us again with a blow of the pole so vigorous that the piece of wood broke in his hands. Without him, we would either have been crushed or drowned." Shortly after emerging from this last gorge, the explorers had a testy encounter with a group of Mitua (Guayabero) Indians, which could easily have turned into a disaster if things had gone wrong (Crevaux 1989:66-91).

11. The accompanying certificate, dated June 2, 1881, read as follows: "The Secretary of State at the Department of the Interior awards a first-class gold medal of honor to Apatou of the Boni tribe (Guyane), who, chosen by Dr. Crevaux to accompany him during his three missions in Equatorial America, showed the most rare devotion under many critical circumstances, and several times saved the lives of members of the expedition" (Brunetti 1890:67).

12. For an ethnography of this Aluku village based on long-term fieldwork, see Givens (1984). Apatu originally named his new village Motende. Later it became known as Apatou. Both names are still used, although Motende is considered by the Aluku the "true" Aluku name for the village, while Apatou is the "official" name used by the French.

was joined by some of his kin from the Dipelu clan in the upriver village of Tabiki (known to the French as L'Enfant Perdu), his original *paandasi*, or "home village."¹³ Behind this move to the coastal region lay a complicated tangle of motives. Aluku oral traditions clearly reveal that Apatu was using his new relationship with the French not only to enhance his own prestige and strengthen his political position, but to distance himself from interclan rivalries and interpersonal tensions and jealousies that had led to accusations of sorcery against him. From the perspective of French administrators on the coast, however, the presence of this new ally and potential mediator within relatively easy reach was a welcome sign that the vast interior of their colony, which remained largely unmapped, was on the way to becoming a French territory not only in name, but in reality.

Apatu's decision to leave his own people was never more than temporary, and should not be read as evidence of an expatriate impulse.¹⁴ Aluku oral traditions confirm that this was not a case of a "turncoat" opting to exchange one identity, or one set of cultural and political loyalties, for another.¹⁵ The

13. According to Hurault (1960:133), whose estimation is apparently based on that of Coudreau (1893:6), approximately a fourth of the entire Aluku population eventually settled with Apatu in his new downriver location.

14. Jean Hurault – whose writings sometimes suffer from a simplistic and romantic assumption that when "tribal" peoples such as the Aluku are brought into contact with European culture, the sole possible outcome is the corruption, debasement, and eventual loss of their own cultural values – sees Apatu's attempts to mediate between his people and the French in an almost entirely negative light. In his view, "as a result of contact with the Europeans, Apatu had become a dogmatic crank, and no longer observed the laws of his own people" (Hurault 1961:226). In the same vein, Hurault depicts the new Aluku village of Motende (Apatou), founded by Apatu in the 1880s, as if it were a pathological aberration. As he tells it (relying a little too heavily on the biased reportage of Apatu's biggest detractor, Henri Coudreau), when Apatu left for the coast, a large group "consisting of the most unruly and greedy [Alukus] followed him in the establishment of a new village near Saint-Laurent. This village had no future, and soon became a center for trade with gold miners; Apatu ended his days with the most unfortunate reputation of usurer and exploiter. The population of this village continually decreased under the influence of venereal diseases, and today numbers only about a hundred persons" (Hurault 1960:133). As I hope the present study shows, Apatu's motives and perceptions were undoubtedly much more complex than these passages would suggest; and a sound understanding of the man, and of his significance for his people, requires a considerably more nuanced treatment than Hurault gives him. In any case, it is interesting to contrast Hurault's jaundiced view of Apatu with the generally high regard in which he continues to be held by most Alukus today. More to the point, I have yet to hear any Aluku represent Apatu as an individual who renounced either his Aluku identity, the "laws of his own people," or the Aluku way of life more generally.

15. The oral traditions paraphrased below were given by Papa Tobu, Papa Topo, Papa Aneli, Papa Dakan, and a number of other Aluku elders.



Apatu proudly wearing one of his medals (from Brunetti 1890)

stories concerning the circumstances surrounding his departure show that his willingness to experiment with the boundaries between identities and to mediate between the Aluku and French colonial worlds, which increased over time, was produced at least in part by factors within his own society. One version of the story, already touched on above, holds that Apatu, possibly because of his early political ambitions, was accused of attempting to harm or murder the Aluku paramount chief, Anato, with *wisi*, or sorcery. (Interestingly enough, Anato was married to Apatu's classificatory "sister"

[*sisá*], his mother's sister's daughter, and it is said that the two "brothers-in-law" [*swagi*] were relatively close.) When the French explorer Crevaux suddenly arrived in search of an Aluku guide, Apatu, hurt by the unjust accusations against him, seized the opportunity to quit the Aluku territory in an honorable way. Before departing with Crevaux, he publicly drank an oath to the sacred *sweli* oracle, requesting that if the accusations against him were true, he be struck dead during the perilous journey into unknown territory on which he was about to embark; but if they were false, he should be safely guided through the dangers and be allowed to return alive to his friends and family in the Aluku territory.¹⁶ When he returned a hero, the first Aluku to explore not only the Brazilian Amazon, but also the almost unimaginably distant and dangerous *bakaa konde* (land of the whites) across the ocean, his troubles were not over.¹⁷ Though he should have been vindicated by the successful completion of his journey, his new status had earned him the jealousy of his Aluku countrymen, some of whom continued to whisper suspicions of sorcery behind his back; moreover, he faced increasing distrust from the paramount chief himself, who was not pleased with Apatu's growing influence with the French, or his willingness to take the initiative in acting as a middle-man in negotiations between them and the Aluku – a sphere of authority that Gaanman Anato considered to be exclusively his own.

Disgusted with the continuing undercurrent of hostility, Apatu decided to move downriver, where he founded the new village of Motende. Over the next few years, with the blessings and material support of his French allies, both Apatu and his new village flourished. The tensions in the upriver villages eventually dissipated, and Apatu continued to act as an effective mediator between the French and his own people. After a time, he also mended with Gaanman Anato, who ended up cooperating with him, attempting from time to time to use Apatu's special relationship with the French to his own advantage. Things had worked out well for Apatu; he was once again highly regarded by his own people in the interior, with whom he had maintained close relations, and he also had the respect of the French. But even as late as 1891, when his "brother-in-law" (*swagi*) Gaanman Anato died, the old

16. For a detailed description of this *sweli* oracle, which has traditionally been used in Aluku to detect and punish sorcerers (*wisiman*), see Bilby (1997).

17. After completing their final journey together, Crevaux and Apatu boarded a boat in Trinidad, which had just come from French Guiana. On the boat they met some other passengers who had recently been in the interior of French Guiana prospecting for gold. According to Crevaux's notes, "one of them gave our faithful Apatu news of his family and announced to him that the Aluku people wanted to award him supreme honors. It's an award that would be well deserved, but which doesn't move our companion much. The brave boy seems more touched to learn that his mother and sister are well and still thinking of him" (Crevaux 1989:174-75).

suspicions came back to haunt him. The story goes that shortly before the paramount chief's death, Apatu had seduced the wife of a man named Wasi, and the affair had been discovered.¹⁸ According to the Aluku custom of the time, a wronged husband had the right to challenge a man who had committed adultery with his wife to a fight; but he was required to fight the wrongdoer individually, without any help from kinsmen. Wasi was afraid of Apatu, who was renowned for his strength and courage, and so he backed down and never took action. When Anato died, Wasi was chosen to act as one of the bearers of the paramount chief's corpse. To exact revenge on Apatu, Wasi manipulated the corpse's movements in such a way as to make it look as if the paramount chief's spirit was pointing at Apatu and saying that it was he who had killed him with sorcery. Although Apatu was never punished for the ostensible crime, the accusation continued to hang over him, and understandably created some bitterness in him and his close kin.¹⁹ Today it is generally accepted that the accusations against Apatu were false, that his enemy Wasi had intentionally made the corpse oracle "lie." But the story effectively points to the risks involved for an ambitious and talented cultural broker such as Apatu, whose successes in courting the coastal society not only provoked jealousy, but could also be perceived as threatening to his people.

Many other oral traditions about Apatu point to the conclusion that, despite his ambiguous position as a mediator with the outside world, his identity remained firmly anchored to his own people and his culture of origin. Indeed, the very fact that he continues to be remembered so vividly and in such detail, and that he is generally seen as having lived in an Aluku way no matter how close he became with his French benefactors, leads to this conclusion. Although (according to oral traditions) he may have been baptized "Jean Apatou" or "Joseph Apatou" by the whites, he continued to be known to his fellow villagers simply as Apatu; in fact, he also had another Aluku name that was more frequently used among his own people. The latter name, Paakiseli, continued to be used by his fellow Alukus up until the time of his death. Meaning "idea(s)" or "thought(s)," this name had been bestowed upon him because of his cleverness at the Aluku art of *awawa*, a type of sung social commentary that is practiced in the context of traditional death rites. Today, when the spirit of Apatu is invoked at one of the Aluku shrines to the ancestors, he is usually addressed as Papa Paakiseli. Apatu is also remembered for having been the medium of a *wata wenti*, a river god that would occasionally take possession of him and use him as its mouthpiece. Interestingly, this possessing spirit was acquired during one of his journeys with Crevaux; on

18. In some versions, the wronged husband's name is Yelu.

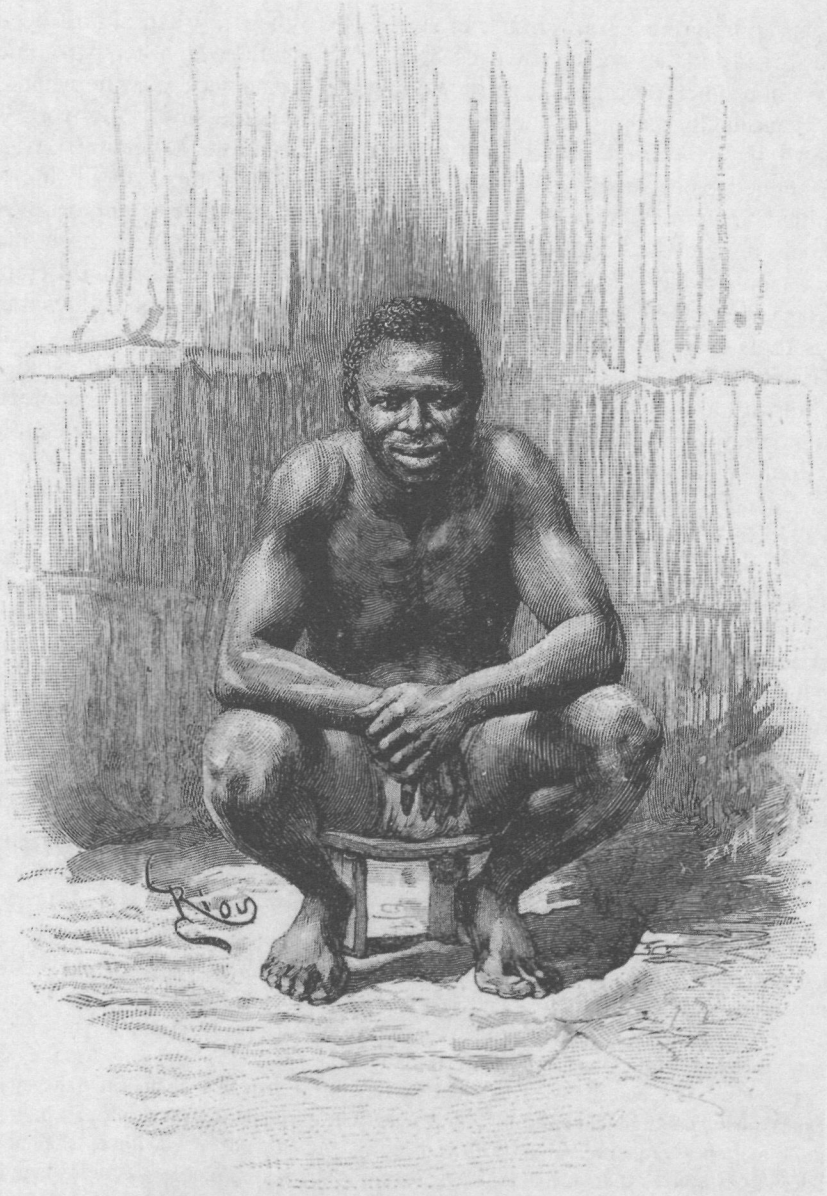
19. Aluku oral traditions concerning accusations of sorcery or witchcraft against Apatu in connection with his voyages of exploration have also been noted by Givens (1984:60) and Bellardie (1994:75).

a particularly dangerous stretch of river, where their raft had almost been destroyed and they had narrowly escaped drowning, the *wata wenti* had come to their rescue. After this, the spirit had followed Apatu back to his homeland, only gradually making its identity known through possession. After Apatu's death, the *wata wenti* passed to a younger member of the Dipelu clan, who continued to be a medium for it well into the twentieth century.²⁰ Orally transmitted "memories" such as these give some indication of the extent to which Apatu remained culturally Aluku even as he strove to redefine himself and his people as "French." In this respect, he was probably not much different from other Alukus – that is, the majority of the population, who followed in his footsteps and eventually became definitively "French" – for whom, as Tristan Bellardie (1994:105) suggests, "being French was above all the idea of territorial protection vis-à-vis external elements, but in no way a submission to laws foreign to Aluku custom, [which were] inevitably incompatible with the will of the ancestors who watched over the tribe."

Seen as a pivotal figure in the process of colonial expansion (Bellardie 1997:100), Apatu continued to be treated with special respect in French Guiana after his return from France, if not to the same degree as in Paris, and his reputation continued to grow, long after the death of his friend and fellow traveler Crevaux. It was Apatu who was responsible for the first exposure of Alukus to French education, arranging for the admission of five Aluku children to a school in Saint-Laurent in late 1881 (Bellardie 1994:72). In July 1887, a decree was issued by the governor of the colony, naming Apatu "Captain of the Bonis [Alukus]," a salaried position under the authority of the traditional Aluku paramount chief, who still lived in the interior (Coudreau 1888:457; Bellardie 1994:80). Apatu had become, in the words of the French explorer Henri Coudreau (1893:6), "officially the second most important person of his tribe."²¹ Following in the footsteps of Crevaux,

20. Yet another way Apatu is remembered in the present is as the cause of a *kunu*, or avenging spirit, that continues to afflict his clan, the *Dipelu lo*. The *kunu* was created when Apatu killed a *mboma* (anaconda) during one of his journeys with Crevaux (Hurault 1961:225-26). Killing one of these sacred snakes is almost certain to result in a new *kunu*, since the spirit of the murdered snake typically returns to wreak vengeance on the clan of the perpetrator; and so it was in this case. Hurault suggests that Apatu killed the snake capriciously, having been corrupted by contact with Europeans, as a result of which he no longer observed "the laws of his own people." But Crevaux's eyewitness account of the incident makes it clear that Apatu's assault on the sacred reptile was defensive: he was forced to kill the anaconda in order to save one of his prized hunting dogs, which had been attacked and dragged into the river by the giant snake, and was being crushed and suffocated by it (Crevaux 1987:93).

21. At this time, if Coudreau is correct, there were four Aluku *kapiten* (village chiefs) operating under the paramount chief; unlike Apatu, however, none of these traditional chiefs was given official recognition by the French colonial government (Coudreau 1888:460).



APATOU PRIMITIF.

"Primitive Apatu" (from Coudreau 1893)

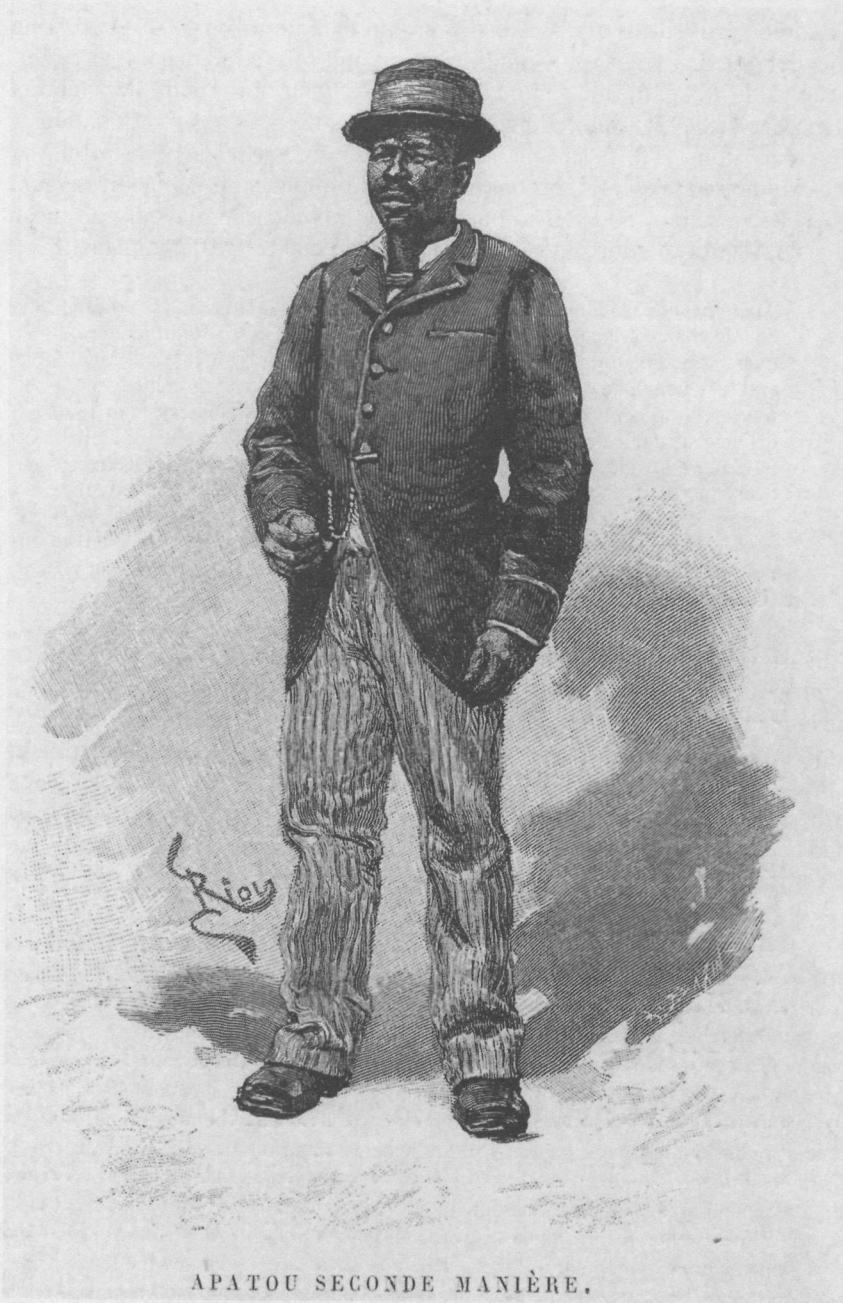
Coudreau arrived for a new expedition into the interior in 1887. At first he was delighted when Apatu sought him out and offered to accompany him. "The faithful Apatu, the famous Apatu, the illustrious Apatu!" exclaimed Coudreau (1893:3). Before long, however, Apatu's new boss was chafing at the pretensions of this "savage," as he called him. Particularly disturbing to the explorer was Apatu's appropriation of the trappings of "Frenchness," and the self-conscious, and self-important, way in which he played with these signs of identity. "Alone in his village," Coudreau (1893:9) complained,

Apatu never abandons his European suit and lives like the black Creoles, having chairs, armchairs, table, and silverware.²² All this is for little more than show. The everyday fare of Apatu is that shared by the Aluku: rice and fish, which he eats in a bowl with his fingers while lying in his hammock. But as soon as some whites show up, he has the table washed, he displays the tablecloth, the wine, and the place setting, and maintains with modesty that since his return from France he has taken his hot chocolate every morning, and is able to eat only as the Parisians do. The vanity of this little flock of Alukus is most amusing; they believe themselves *the great nation* par excellence, and, as Laveau [Coudreau's French assistant] pointed out, Apatu plays *the great Frenchman* [*le grand Français*] among them with sincerity.

At various other points, Coudreau writes of what he calls Apatu's "colossal vanity." "He speaks with the most perfect disdain of his title of captain, which he considers well below what he deserves," comments the French explorer, with typical condescension. "A man like Apatu," continues Coudreau, laying on the sarcasm, "was made to command all the Aluku, all of the black tribes of the Maroni River – who knows? – all of French Guiana, and if he had been taught to read, he would have been known as a great man 'in all the countries of the world'" (Coudreau 1893:6).²³

22. Other French observers were also taken aback by Apatu's sporting of European formal wear, such as Jules Brunetti (1890:155), who quipped on one occasion that Apatu "wears his clothes as well as a member of the Geographic Society."

23. As Coudreau's biographer, Sébastien Benoit, points out, the neophyte explorer, who was only twenty-seven years old when he began working with the more experienced Apatu (then in his late forties or early fifties), was likely envious of both Crevaux, his illustrious predecessor, and Apatu himself. (Indeed, he clearly betrays his jealousy in several published passages, e.g., his tirades against Apatu on pp. 11-12 and 212-15 of *Chez nos Indiens* [Coudreau 1893].) Crevaux, who was a more sensitive observer than Coudreau, and for whom Apatu obviously felt much affection, would have been a hard act to follow. He had received many awards and much praise for his work. In his writings, which were very popular in France, Crevaux always spoke in glowing terms of the "faithful Apatu." Because of Crevaux's accounts of his heroism, and his subsequent travels in France, Apatu himself had already achieved a certain fame by the time Coudreau arrived in French Guiana. Moreover, Apatu would probably have been openly critical of



APATOU SECONDE MANIÈRE.

"Second version of Apatu" (from Coudreau 1893)

Ironically, as it turned out, not only did Apatu's fame continue to grow, but his reputation long outlasted Coudreau's. The honors continued to pile up. In 1891, the same year that Coudreau returned to France from his expedition, Apatu was awarded yet another colonial distinction, being made a Knight of the Order of Cambodia (*Chevalier de l'Ordre du Cambodge*), in appreciation for services rendered to yet another French official, a *chef de service* stationed in the Lawa region named Casey (Coudreau 1893:171; Bellardie 1994:117-18). As Bellardie (1994:117) points out, "in decorating Apatu rather than the paramount chief, France was decorating a man who represented the French assimilation of the Aluku, whereas the paramount chief was still perceived as the guarantor of an independent Aluku culture." When the Aluku paramount chief, Gaanman Anato, died in that very year, 1891, it was Apatu who was sent by his people to Paramaribo, the capital of the neighboring Dutch colony of Suriname, to discuss the question of succession. With a gold rush in full swing in the upriver Aluku territory, parts of which were still claimed by both France and the Netherlands, the Dutch colonial officials had decided to attempt to win the Aluku over to their side. For a time, Apatu led the Dutch on, requesting a number of gifts and a Dutch flag from Paramaribo. When the items arrived, however, the Aluku, no doubt partly at the urging of Apatu himself, ended up rejecting the overtures of the Dutch, choosing instead to maintain the relationship they had earlier established with the French (Bilby 1989:151).

In reaffirming their allegiance to the French, the Aluku were not only voicing their commitment to the path of "Frenchness" already blazed by Apatu, they were also enlisting the protection of a powerful ally, the French state, against the much more numerous Ndyuka Maroons on the other side of the border in Suriname – former enemies of the Aluku, who had long been affiliated with the Dutch, and who stood ready to annex the Aluku territory into their own at the least excuse. From the perspective of Apatu and his fellow villagers, this obligation to provide protection against a common enemy was mutual. Thus, we learn in the report of a Surinamese missionary working in the heart of the Ndyuka territory that when a Frenchman named Goffroy, the administrator of a gold mine in the interior, visited the Ndyuka capital of Diitabiki in 1899, he came armed with protection from the Aluku. The Frenchman wore on his arm a protective *obia* amulet that had been prepared for him by Apatu's own mother, he said, to ensure that the Ndyuka could do him no harm (Spalburg 1979:62).

Coudreau, a young upstart who, despite the age difference between them, displayed an arrogance that contrasted with the camaraderie that had characterized his relationship with his former traveling companion. Because of this, "Apatu, so proud of having accompanied Crevaux to France and of having been decorated, [became] the privileged target of Coudreau" (Benoit 2000:79).



Apatou et sa famille (Apatu and his family), early 1900s (from postcard)

Around this same time, a North American gold prospector working on the lower Maroni River, Howard Pedrick, also found that Apatu was a man of great standing in the region. Though it was general knowledge that he was firmly in the French camp, Apatu, whom Pedrick consistently referred to as "King Apatoo," was known and respected, if not feared, by all in the area. After the renowned Aluku captain visited him for the first time, Pedrick reports, "the news that King Apatoo had called on me seemed to spread like an epidemic. Dutch officials from Paramaribo, French from Cayenne, and an Englishman from Georgetown came up to question me. They were all afraid of a raid by the King" (DeGrouchy & Magee 1930:152). According to Pedrick, "when [Apatu's] subjects addressed him, they had to salaam from bended knees" (De Grouchy & Magee 1930:145). Pedrick received proof of Apatu's devotion to his French allies on numerous occasions. One time, when a detachment of French soldiers stationed temporarily at Pedrick's camp became critically ill, Apatu appeared with five elderly women from his village, offering to heal the incapacitated Frenchmen using traditional Aluku methods, including herbal treatment. When the soldiers began to improve, "the commander of the small army was so elated over what Apatoo was doing that he gave him a letter to deliver personally to the Commandant at St. Laurent" (DeGrouchy & Magee 1930:209). Once again, the officials at Saint-Laurent had reason to be pleased with *le fidèle Apatou*. "A week later [Apatu and his men] returned with every canoe piled high with bolts of calico, cans of sardines, all kinds of trinkets, French flags, iron pots, knives, forks and dishes."

Eventually Apatu became a part-time resident of the coastal town of Saint-Laurent, where he continued to act as a respected intermediary between the French and his people in the interior until his death in 1908 (Bilby 1990:288). The position that had been created for him was not abandoned upon his demise; from then on, a specially appointed Aluku captain would live in Saint-Laurent to help mediate in relations between the French and the local Maroon population, a tradition that continues up to the present (Bilby 1990:628).

In the years leading up to departmentalization, the Aluku continued to develop a sense of "Frenchness" that distinguished them from the other Guianese Maroons. A report from 1940 by a French civil servant based in the upriver Aluku territory gives some idea of both French and Aluku attitudes toward the relationship between them that Apatu had done so much to foster. "The idea has sometimes been expressed," writes this official,

that the disappearance of a handful of Alukus from our territory would get rid of some of the French government's worries. This is nothing but simplistic imagination, the immediate consequences of which would be to oblige us to depend on a foreign labor force ... To arouse the Aluku people's feeling of pride, to use their self-esteem, is to ensure for ourselves precious auxiliaries in any circumstance. We have blacks who are vigorous, intelligent, and conscious of their attachment to France, who ask only to propagate themselves and expand on our territory. Let's give them all the means to develop and increase through a higher birth rate, to which we should extend our protection. This would be an eminently colonial and humane undertaking. (Vaillant 1940:xii)

Shortly before this, another kind of "Maroon" had entered the scene. Léon Gontran Damas, the fiery third of the founding triumvirate of poets of *Négritude*, had arrived in 1934, at the behest of the Musée de l'Homme in Paris, to carry out ethnographic research on his homeland (Damas 2003:25-29).²⁴ A Creole from the coastal region of French Guiana, Damas, following the advice of his mentor Marcel Mauss, quickly gravitated to the Aluku in the interior, whom he considered a "Black people who had remained pure" (Filostrat 1979:214; Damas 2003:27). The Aluku also represented to Damas, in the words of one of his biographers, "the salvation" of French Guiana (Filostrat 1979:215). As Damas later wrote, the Aluku (and other Maroons living in the interior of the Guianas) "are hard workers who intend to remain true to themselves in their way of work and enjoyment ... From them one can hope a great deal. They are natural, spontaneous, simple and proud of their simplicity: greatly different from the 'petit bourgeois' ... who are against any social and material change in the wretched state of Guyane"

24. See also Kesteloot 1988:155; Racine 1988:51; Poujols 2003:13-14.

(Damas, cited in Filostrat 1979:215; Damas 2003:75).²⁵ To the surprise of his patrons, Damas's "mission to study the Bush Negroes ... exploded with passionate indignation into a full-scale critique of French policy and mismanagement" (Jones 1988:37-38). The resulting book, *Retour de Guyane*, published in 1938, on the eve of departmentalization, remains one of the harshest condemnations of French colonialism and assimilationist policy in the Caribbean to date.²⁶

Some critics of French policy in the region continue to say of Damas that he "was a Maroon," and to speak of his expressions of anticolonial thought as "the rehabilitation of marronage" (Juminer 1978:12, 1988:43). And the image of the escaped slave – the *neg mawon* [*nèg marron*] – remains a common one in the discourse of resistance in the French Antilles (Burton 1995:165; Price & Price 1998:96). Not only has it left its mark on the literary world, but it has also had great appeal for independentists during periods of increased tension, particularly in Guadeloupe.

What, then, are we to make of Apatu, the *actual* Maroon who sought, at some not entirely superficial level, to "become French"? And what of his people, the Aluku Maroons, the majority of whom are today, in every legal sense, fully French?

Although departmentalization occurred in French Guiana, as in the rest of the French Caribbean, in 1946, the crucial years for the Aluku were the 1970s and 1980s. In 1969, the separately administered Inini Territory, within which their traditional villages were located, was dissolved, and the process of full integration began apace. The Aluku were subjected to a policy of assimilation that was applied with a suddenness and intensity paralleled in few other parts of France's remaining overseas empire. Their territory was rapidly divided up to create new French municipalities, French administrative structures and political parties were introduced along with French schools as quickly as possible, and an avalanche of public funds originating in the Metropole was

25. Damas's original words were as follows: "[*les gens ... des champs, des bois*] sont de rudes travailleurs, qui entendent rester semblables à eux-mêmes dans la manière de travailler, de s'amuser ... D'eux, on peut attendre beaucoup. Ils sont naturels, spontanés, simples et forts de cette simplicité: ils tranchent agréablement sur nos petits bourgeois ... De ceux-là, il ne faut attendre ... qu'une résistance désespérée à tout ce qui pourrait apporter une modification à l'état social et matériel misérable de la Guyane" (Damas 2003:75).

26. So incendiary did the authorities consider Damas's book that soon after publication, according to one story, the French government bought up as many copies as it could find and burned them all, making the work almost impossible to get thereafter. Until a new, expanded edition (Damas 2003) was finally published, more than six decades after the book's first appearance (and more than twenty years after Damas's death), it was a rare item indeed – so rare that only two or three libraries in the United States held copies.

unleashed on the Aluku (Bilby 1990:158-221). The sudden influx of money and consumer goods was irresistible, and many Alukus felt that they were now reaping the true rewards of Frenchness. As one writer put it, the Aluku were experiencing "the euphoria of assimilation" (Anonymous 1993:16).

But, as elsewhere in the French Caribbean, they were also experiencing an accompanying malaise. In some ways, because of the suddenness of the transformations imposed upon the Aluku, this sense of unease was probably felt more acutely by them than by the residents of coastal French Guiana. With the brief upsurge of independentist sentiment in Cayenne during the 1970s, a handful of young Alukus aligned themselves with Creole independentists, creating a short-lived party called the *Mouvement Libération Boni de la Guyane Groupement Populaire* (Bilby 1990:198-99, 485-86, 615). Since the demise of this party at the end of the decade, however, there has been little if any support among the Aluku for the idea of independence. On the one hand, those Alukus with whom I have discussed the question take a pragmatic stance, recognizing along with the rest of French Guiana that cutting the ties with the Metropole would spell an instant descent into an economic crisis as bad as, if not worse than, the one that has been plaguing neighboring Suriname since the early 1980s; on the other hand, they point out that continuing rule by the French state provides a buffer between them and the dominant Creole population of the coastal region, much as their affiliation with the French during the nineteenth century protected them from domination by their former enemies, the Ndyuka Maroons. Yet, there is something deeper in this resistance to the idea of independence; despite their continuing distrust of, and sometimes hostility toward, the *Faansi bakaa*, the metropolitan French, many Alukus evince an obvious pride in flying the French flag, and in asserting their claims to Frenchness. In the atmosphere of ethnic contestation and the scramble for state funds that characterize modern French Guianese politics, the Aluku often fall back on a declaration that has both instrumental and affective meanings: "we have *always* been French." One thinks of the civil servant quoted above, Vaillant, who urged his superiors to adopt a policy that would maintain the loyalty of France's Aluku allies by appealing to the heart – by encouraging in them a mutual pride combining their own sense of self-esteem with an instilled pride in "Frenchness" – "an eminently colonial and humane undertaking," as he put it.²⁷ One thinks

27. A good example of this positive sentiment toward *Faansi* (France) was given me by Gaanman Tolinga, paramount chief of the Aluku from 1969 to 1990, the critical period during which the policy of *francisation* was first applied to the Aluku territory on a large scale. (Interestingly, Tolinga himself was named after a French [in fact, Corsican] colonist known as Tollinche, who had played a major role in solidifying the relationship between the Aluku and the French state during the mid-nineteenth century; at one point,

also of Captain Apatu, who some five decades earlier was showered with colonial honors and given to know that his and his people's special qualities were highly valued by the French empire – indeed, by some of its wisest and most powerful men. Here, perhaps, we see a divergence from the more common assimilationist model that once reigned in the French Caribbean, in which one ostensibly becomes French by devaluing, denying, and suppressing, if not entirely erasing, everything that is black and African, local and indigenous. But more recent trends in the Caribbean

Tollinche had actually joined Crevaux during one of his excursions in French Guiana [Crevaux 1987:178].) Like many other Alukus, Gaanman Tolinga was quick to contrast the affinity he felt for France with the aversion he had to Suriname, the land of ancestral slavery. (For more on the history of state penetration among the Aluku, and the “divided loyalties” created thereby, see Bilby 1989.) In a conversation I recorded in my fieldnotes, the paramount chief

pointed out that it wasn't with the Dutch that the Aluku had made peace, it was with the French side. It was the Dutch who had punished the Aluku. He said that they used to commit all kinds of cruelties against the ancestors. For instance, they would pull the wraparound skirts off a grown woman who had already borne children, and make her walk around naked, to humiliate her; he said there's even a place located near Paramaribo called Puu Pangi (“take off skirt”), where they used to do this. And they would whip people mercilessly. They would take a pregnant woman and tie her over a barrel, and then give her lashes – for every lashing that they counted as one, they would really give two; so that if someone was condemned to receive 12 lashes, he would really receive 24 ... [This is why] Tolinga can't tolerate the Surinamese. The French, on the other hand, never committed such atrocities against the Aluku. (conversation of June 25, 1986)

In some ways, Tolinga may be seen as a twentieth-century counterpart to Apatu. During the 1940s and 1950s, he served as a guide for the French geographer and explorer Jean Hurault. In the early 1970s, as reported in the Surinamese newspaper *De West* (May 29, 1971), Tolinga was taken to France as part of an official French Guianese delegation. Much like Apatu, who nearly a century earlier had breakfasted with the prime minister, Tolinga “was granted an audience with President Georges Pompidou at the Élysée” (Bilby 1990:158). To signal his appreciation for the recently inaugurated French leader, he renamed his village on the Lawa River, which was to become the Aluku “capital,” “Pompidouville” (while the previous name, Papai Siton, was also retained). Like Apatu, Tolinga, despite his apparent support for *francisation* and the key role he played as a mediator between his people and the French state, continued in many ways to adhere to traditional Aluku cultural principles, repeatedly and very effectively using the traditional Aluku religious system, for example, to counter challenges to his authority (Bilby 1990:198-216). In recent years, Tolinga, who died in 1990, has also been feted with a series of state-sponsored cultural events, such as the “Mémorial Tolinga” that took place in Papai Siton (Pompidouville-Papaïchton) from July 27-29, 2001.

overseas departments suggest that the assimilationist process might have evolved into something more closely resembling the wooing of Apatu and his people more than a century ago. For now, in the Antilles, and increasingly in French Guiana, we encounter an emphasis on the idea of "difference," whether in the guise of *négritude*, *antillanité*, *créolité*, or other forms of *identité*, a difference that is increasingly celebrated and treated with pride. The problem, of course, is that, below the surface, celebrations of *la différence* have become harder and harder to distinguish from celebrations of Frenchness.²⁸

Much like the French West Indian intellectuals that Richard Burton (1995: 158) has designated *les marrons de la différence* – those latter-day Maroons of the mind in search of Glissant's *arrière pays*, that mental hinterland "in which individual and community can find refuge from the advancing empire of the Same" – planners of these state-sponsored celebrations of difference participate in a profoundly ambivalent project. And in this ambivalence may lie a unique kind of power, the power to contain and reduce difference even while celebrating it. As Burton (1995:158-59), drawing on Michel de Certeau, tells us,

for the would-be maroon in contemporary Martinique and Guadeloupe there is practically nowhere, either within or without, in which to live and from which to speak, that has not already in some way been taken over by the dominant discourse, so that the language of Difference is often uncannily transformed, without the speaker's knowledge, into the language of the Same, and the status quo is sustained and perpetuated by the very counter-discourse it provokes.

And what would Captain Apatu, the French Maroon par excellence, have thought of the increasingly ambivalent situation in which his people find themselves today? We cannot know. But even in the relatively vast and

28. In French Guiana, where a kind of officially supported multiculturalism has taken root, state-sponsored celebrations of "difference" also sometimes shade into another, related kind of assimilationist vision, one based on the notion of Creole (rather than metropolitan French) hegemony. In this variant, cultural and ethnic difference are similarly portrayed as beneficial, but mainly because it is felt they will eventually contribute an invigorating and enriching mix of new ingredients to the dominant Creole "identity," even as they are absorbed into it through an inevitable process of *créolisation* (rather than outright *francisation*) (Bilby 1998:350-53). This French Guianese "Creolocentric" ideology overlaps, in ways that may be problematic for present-day Maroons, with the theories of *créolité* that have become so popular in the French Antilles (on this question, see Price & Price 1997, especially pp. 8-9); for the particular contemporary school of *créoliste* thought that first emerged among a number of prominent literary figures in Martinique and Guadeloupe has had an impact in French Guiana as well.



Gendarmerie, Apatou, French Guiana, 1990 (photo: K. Bilby)

sparsely settled hinterland of French Guiana, the *arrière pays* of Glissant and *les marrons de la différence* recedes as the forces of assimilation advance, and somehow Apatu, the first Aluku to know Paris, continues to loom large in this process. It is fitting, perhaps, that this famous Maroon, who, according to Coudreau, so liked to play *le grand Français*, now has an entire French commune named after him, and his own PTT *code postal* to boot.²⁹ It is equally fitting that in 1997 this French commune played host to a much-publicized, state-sponsored “Memorial of Apatu,” described in the local press as “a great event in commemoration of a historic figure.”³⁰ During “three days of festivities,” scholars and local authorities – at least two of them *Métropolitains* – held forth on the significance of Captain Apatu for understanding the present. According to a graduate student doing historical research on the recipient of these posthumous honors, Apatu was not only “a true pioneer of interethnic relations,” but “an extraordinary individual, and ahead of his time, French but still Aluku” (Simon 1997). Crowning the festivities was the inauguration of an “official bust” of Apatu.³¹

29. Nowadays, the quickest and surest way to send a letter from abroad to someone living in the South American Maroon village founded by Apatu is to address it to “(name of addressee), Apatou 97317, FRANCE.”

30. *France-Guyane*, December 18, 1997.

31. Young Aluku politicians affiliated with the PSG (*Parti socialiste guyanais*) had actually been trying to secure state funds for the construction of a statue of Apatu since at least the mid-1980s (Bilby 1990:498).

A few years later, in 2002, a stir was created in French Guiana by plans for yet another official celebration of *le fidèle Apatou* – a French-funded *conférence-débat* and *spectacle de fin d'année*. The first part, entitled *Apatou Yesterday and Today*, was to consist of a theatrical performance with music and dance; the second, *Sur les traces d'Apatou* (In the Footsteps of Apatu) would have as its high point an exhibition.³² Hosted by the Collège Apatou, the French secondary school that sits in the village founded by Captain Apatou himself, the exhibit was to be dedicated not to Apatu, but to the nineteenth-century French explorer Henri Coudreau, the man who found Apatu's experiments with Frenchness so distasteful, and whose colonialist arrogance Apatu likely found equally annoying. One senses a linkage, however oblique, with another black Frenchman of sorts, the Martiniquan artist and convict Médard Aribot who, through the prism of colonial nostalgia, was transformed into a folkloric hero for the 1990s, the subject of state-sponsored literary treatments and expensive public spectacles (Price 1998). And one is tempted to muse over whether, in the 1930s or 1940s, Médard the prisoner might have crossed paths with Apatu's children or grandchildren while serving time in Saint-Laurent, the capital of France's notorious overseas penal colony, where Apatu once held a prestigious post as the first French-installed Aluku *capitaine* with responsibility for Maroon sojourners in the coastal area – and where he lies buried today.³³

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, the Aluku still hold out hope for a future existence within, yet apart from, France. The machinery of *francisation*, for all its seductive power, may yet turn out to have limits, but the question of what these might be remains a disquieting mystery. The overall picture is far from encouraging. Although a number of individual Alukus, especially those who have become adept at navigating their way through the jungle of French Guianese politics, appear to be prospering as penetration by the French state accelerates, the majority remain in a precarious position. Pressures mount to bring the Aluku territory into line with French legal notions of private ownership of land, threatening to further atomize a population traditionally held together by a system of communal land tenure closely tied to social structure and religious life. In some ways, Aluku entrepreneurs have managed defiantly to resist control by the long arm of

32. Personal communication, Dénètem Touam Bona, October 2, 2002.

33. Among the growing number of graves in Saint-Laurent's central cemetery belonging to Maroons, Apatu's is not only the oldest (dating back to 1908), but also one of the most prominent. Even in death, *le fidèle Apatou* continues to serve as a symbolic bridge between the *Businenge* (Maroon) and *Bakaa* (coastal/Western/Creole) worlds: every November 1, a number of Alukus living in the area join Saint-Laurent's Creole residents in observing the traditional "Fête de la Toussaint," honoring their famous ancestor by placing flowers and lighted candles on his grave.



Apatu's final resting place, Saint-Laurent-du-Maroni, 1987 (photo: K. Bilby)

the state, but not without a heavy price, paid both by their own people, and some of the foreigners they employ, especially impoverished Brazilian immigrants. As in Apatu's time, "gold fever" has gripped the Aluku territory, but this time on a larger scale, and with graver consequences (Anonymous 2002). In some parts of the territory, Aluku "autonomy" has come to look more and more like a state of lawlessness and disorder. During the last few years, reports have proliferated of Aluku mine operators acting as virtual warlords, relying on "private militias" to enforce coercive labor practices. There are accounts of violence, including torture and murder. Parts of the region are now often described as a sort of "Wild West." Meanwhile, in the wake of this most recent gold rush, ecological degradation continues apace, with mercury pollution and other forms of environmental damage causing major problems in both the traditional Aluku villages, and those of their Wayana Indian neighbors (Price & Price 2002, 2003:78-82). In short, as one observer recently noted, "the Aluku world's physical distance from Cayenne has combined with the general indifference (and ignorance about the interior of French Guiana) of the politicians there to turn French plans for the social and cultural assimilation of Alukus into something of an ongoing nightmare" (Christiane Taubira-Delannon, cited in Price & Price 2002:45).

It is still too early, in any case, to tell whether French Guiana's highly distinctive Maroon populations are destined to become, like opponents of assimilation in Guadeloupe and Martinique, *marrons de la différence*, rather than *Marrons de fait*.³⁴ For the moment, in a way that the "faithful Apatu" himself most likely would have understood, most of his descendants, while certainly French by choice, still feel themselves to be – in both senses of the term – *toujours Aloukou*: "still," and "always," Aluku.

34. For a discussion of recent developments among the varied Maroon populations of French Guiana, and of the political, economic, and cultural challenges facing *all* Maroons in this French overseas department, including the Aluku, see Price & Price (2003:69-101).



Apatu's grave marker (close up), 1987: "Ci-Gît APATOU Joseph, Capitaine des Bonis,
DÉCÉDÉ A ST-LAURENT, le 1er DÉCEMBRE 1908, A L'AGE DE 75 ANS"
(photo: K. Bilby)



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*FASCINANS OR TREMENDUM? PERMUTATIONS
OF THE STATE, THE BODY, AND THE DIVINE IN
LATE-TWENTIETH-CENTURY HAVANA*

POST-SOVIET WORLDS

When I began doing fieldwork on Afro-Cuban religion in Miami in 1985, I had no idea that I would ever concern myself with what then was still unthinkable: the demise of the Soviet Union and its effects on the phenomena my research focused on. No less than those of their subjects, however, ethnographers' lives are subject to the vagaries of history. As a result, I find myself writing this essay not just as a Caribbeanist, but as a student of post-Soviet transitions. This is ironic in more than one sense, for not only has my work in Cuba since 1993¹ forced me to confront issues and ask questions that I had previously thought largely irrelevant to the ethnography and cultural history of Afro-Cuban religions. Rather, the impossibility of extricating my subject matter – Afro-Cuban religious knowledge and practice – from its observational context in the massive crisis Cuba is currently experiencing, has turned me into a denizen of a disciplinary niche I never thought I would inhabit.

Postsocialist ethnography is rapidly becoming a distinct genre of its own, and it has given a tremendous boost to the anthropology of Eastern

1. This essay is based on fieldwork intermittently conducted in Havana between 1993 and 2000. As it was going into print, the Cuban state announced wide-reaching monetary reforms effectively ending the circulation of U.S. currency as legal tender on the island as of November 8, 2004, and mandating its replacement with the *peso convertible* as a hard currency equivalent (Banco Central de Cuba, Resolución No. 80/2004, proclaimed October 27, 2004). Ironically, parts of my ethnography must now be read as documenting a mere phase in the history of Cuban cash practices – a reminder, perhaps, of the tenuousness of any “ethnographic present” and the generalizations one might draw from data cast in this representational mode.

Europe. To be sure, whatever one may be observing in Cuba these days, calling it "postsocialist" may be to jump to a politically immature and perhaps irresponsible, but certainly analytically shallow, conclusion. Nevertheless, I cannot refrain from drawing an analogy with the forms of institutional cathexis Eastern European ethnography is experiencing these days. This is well expressed (in all its ambiguities) by Katherine Verdery (1997:716) who notes that ethnographers of Eastern Europe nowadays take on "a job other anthropologists have done for decades: describing the penetration of capital into non-capitalist ways of organizing the world." Harking back to another time-hallowed item on the anthropological agenda (see also Marcus & Fisher 1986), she tells us, somewhat self-consciously, that

Making of necessity a virtue, I would say that Eastern Europe is a particularly advantageous place from which to launch [a] culturally based critique of liberal capitalist democracy. This is so because Eastern Europe is especially close to capitalist democracy's heartland and because politicians (not to mention everyday thinking) in Western Europe, the United States, and the East itself have so long presented the East as a group of civilized captive nations with European traditions who, unlike the Third World, would be European if only they could throw off the Soviet yoke.²

Here, the implication seems to be, might lie a new frontier for anthropology, fortuitously created by the so-called end of the cold war. As capitalist market relations begin to permeate the former second world, might we not get, as it were, a second chance to study processes akin to those out of which the ethnographically known non-Western world emerged?

Whether one shares Verdery's enthusiasm or not, the entrance into the New World Order (or disorder, for that matter) that is likely to structure whatever social realities anthropologists might come to study in former second world locations does hold empirical and theoretical challenges. Yet the language in which we phrase such processes, it seems to me, remains oddly cluttered with concepts, such as "dollarization," "demonstration effects," or simply "economic liberalization" and "the market," that fail to capture what exactly is going on. "The market," indeed, is a case in point, for in much social science discourse it tends to assume, nowadays, a semantic function quite akin to Rudolph Otto's (1979) old definition of the "holy": an irresistible, but ultimately uncanny force which we can only circumscribe, but never fully know. The analogy is not as fortuitous as it might seem, and it holds troubling methodological implications. As Clifford Geertz (1968:109) once

2. Cuba, of course, is no less close to the "heartland" – only some ninety miles away, after all, and from the perspective of Cuban Miami, it indeed appears a nation captive of a totalitarian regime, and/or its perverse ideologies. Yet what would Cuba become if it threw off its "anachronistic" yoke? On this question see Fernández Retamar 1996.

put it, even the most intimate personal accounts of religious experience present themselves to those who have not shared such experiences at a remove similar to that which separates a dream experience from the kind of "secondary revision" that eventually becomes available to a psychoanalyst in the dreamer's conscious account. Much of the same, I would argue, might be said about everyday economic experience and its theoreticization in terms of more or less politically disciplined systems of lay or expert knowledge. Substitute "economic" for "religious," "market" for "ritual" in the following passage, and think of the vagaries of, for example, the international market in commodity futures, and you will get the idea: "Religious belief in the midst of ritual," Geertz (1968:111) wrote back then,

where it engulfs the total person, connecting him, as far as he is concerned, to the deepest foundations of existence, and religious belief as the amalgam of ideas, precepts, judgments, and emotions that the experience of that engulfment insinuates into the temper of everyday life are simply not the same thing. The former is the source of the latter; but it is the latter which shapes social action.

Given the analogy I have set up here,³ and harking back to the issue of post-socialist market transitions, the analytical question at hand may well be this: are we dealing with processes that can be adequately described, let alone analyzed in the way Verdery presents them, that is, as the penetration of capital into noncapitalist ways of organizing the world? Or might we not set ourselves up for yet another round of reifications by confusing economic doctrine with economic experience?⁴ The point here is certainly not that anthropology has

3. It has, of course, a considerable genealogy, reaching back to at least Marx for whom it represented a favorite trope for exposing the irrationalism of both bourgeois religious and economic beliefs. In a rather different sense, however, the rhetorical equation between defection from socialist regimes to capitalist ones (or vice versa) and religious conversion was common in both first and second world's political parlance during the heyday of the cold war. For a more contemporary example see Wuthnow (1996:152), who has no qualms about analogizing the cultural form cash practices take in the United States to the phenomenological problem Geertz pointed to: "To the outside viewer, it may be assumed that a person 'has money' (knows God), but the evidence comes from externalized activities, such as buying things (going to church)."

4. Put even more simply: in a late capitalist economy the experience of global economic forces that may engulf your life by putting you out of work simply because your job in a first world primary production sector can be profitably relocated to a cheaper third world labor market may not be expressible in terms of your cognized model of the fundamental justness of capitalism. Yet the economic models that shaped the social actions productive of this particular outcome may be entirely consistent with your own cognized model of what economic life should be all about. The conditions of domination and exploitation are reproduced in the consciousness of the dominated. Gramsci called it "hegemony."

no business concerning itself with the predicament of people living through situations comparable to what the Cuban state declared to be a "special period in times of peace" in 1991 so as to drive home the need to institute wartime austerity measures in the absence of any formally declared war. Rather, it is that we perhaps ought to approach the conditions under which our interlocutors are forced to live through what, in this case, represents the unusual scenario of a nonexistent war causing real infrastructural and human damage with a sense of humility that extends to the abstractions we cull from our mediate, and often happily limited, involvement in their plight. Like my Cuban friends, beholden as they are to the rituals and rigors of the economic realities they cannot escape, I think we, too, are groping in the dark, caught up in an analytical equivalent to the shifting middle ground between belief, skepticism, and sheer incomprehension they inhabit. For might not the trope of radical discontinuity between "market" and "plan" we have so readily come to deploy in the aftermath of Eric Hobsbawm's "short" twentieth century (1914-89) occlude and disable, rather than open up, the analytical possibility of engaging *both* "first" and "second" worlds as "fantasy spaces": moral universes that took shape less as functions of competing political-economic and moral truth claims, than as the result of everyday practices tenuously shoring up "objectively necessary appearances," while often enough patently calling them into question at the same time.⁵

TWO STORIES ABOUT MONEY IN CUBA

Let me illustrate this somewhat abstract formulation with two ethnographic vignettes. Ostensibly speaking to what might be conceptualized as predictable side-effects of Cuba's recent monetary policies, these anecdotes illustrate a more fundamental dilemma, which Parker Shipton (1990) and Caroline Humphreys (1995) in very different contexts refer to as a "scrambling of exchange spheres" or "crisis of value." The first story concerns a meeting in the city of Matanzas with a retired school teacher whom my

5. As Immanuel Wallerstein argued again and again, the socialist bloc had always been part of the "modern capitalist world system." No matter to what extent member-states of the COMECON actually managed to repress market mechanism in their formal economic sectors, socialist societies invariably contained noncriminalized "grey" zones that were tolerated to alleviate shortages alongside burgeoning bona fide black markets; in an even more fundamental sense, the fact that the world had simply not – or not yet – become fully enveloped by socialist internationalism forced such states to assume the ideologically odious responsibility of acting as the surrogate capitalist in respect to transactions with the class-enemy conducted on the level of external trade. The World Revolution, of course, would have changed all that, and so everybody kept waiting for Godot.

wife and I wound up talking to during my first trip to Cuba in the spring of 1993. I asked him where I could get something to drink, and he very kindly escorted my wife and me to his house where he gave us some water. Within a few minutes of conversation he suddenly paused and told us to wait for a minute, while he disappeared into what seemed to be his bedroom. At the time, Matanzas had a very limited tourist infrastructure, and the U.S. dollar had not yet been legalized as a second currency circulating against the Revolutionary peso, though this was to happen in the summer of that year when the Cuban state launched a well-coordinated coup on its citizens' illicit foreign currency savings by opening the doors of state-owned *diplo-tiendas*, that is, stores previously catering to foreigners and foreigners alone, to general effective (i.e. dollar-backed) demand. When the man came back, he presented us with a pre-Revolutionary twenty-peso bill issued in 1958, and printed, as I realized only days later, by the U.S.-based American Bank Note Company (see also Ferguson 1997). As if to compound the ironies already implicit in a piece of legal tender circulating within a nation that did not even print its own money, the bill depicted Antonio Maceo, the black hero of the Cuban wars of independence, the second of which found its conclusion – or abortion if you will – in the so-called Spanish-American war of 1898, and the de facto colonization of Cuba by North American capital.

"Ah," our host sighed, "this still was money! Not like today. Can you believe," he asked us, "that the Cuban peso was worth more than the U.S. dollar at that time?"

"Keep it," he urged me, "I used to teach history, you know, and I want you to understand this lesson."

"This," he said, pulling a current five-peso bill out of his shirt pocket, "is garbage, *una basura*. A piece of paper," he added, excusing himself for using such language in front of my wife, "good enough for wiping your ass [*para limpiarse el culo*]. *Así es la Cuba de ahora: una mierda*" (this is what today's Cuba is like: a piece of shit).

Today, Maceo still looks at you from the five-peso bills issued by the Revolutionary Cuban Central Bank. If you catch hold of one issued before 1997, it will still guarantee that it represents a state obligation convertible against the gold and other reserves of the Cuban national treasury. But on its back you will not see the 1958 bill's depiction of the famous meeting between Maceo and the Spanish general, Martínez Campos, at Baraguá in 1878, where despite the hopeless military situation, Maceo refused to surrender unless slavery were abolished and Cuba given independence. What the backside of the pre-1997 bill features instead is an image of the *invasión* of western Cuba by the victorious rag-tag guerrilla of Dr. Fidel Castro Ruiz during the months of September and October of 1958. By 1997, however, the bill had mutated again. Maceo's serene face on the front remained, but all references to the bill's function as a state guaranteed universal commodity-equivalent had dis-

appeared. Different from the so-called *peso convertible* or *peso fuerte*, a form of dollar surrogate which initially emerged in the post-1991 period to circulate exclusively between tourists and the state (the earliest bills, in fact, bore the palm-tree logo of the largest state-owned tourist agency, INTUR),⁶ and which proclaims its free convertibility into foreign currency, the regular peso notes printed after 1997 no longer give any such guarantees. Interestingly, however, on the reverse of the 1997 five-peso bill, Maceo and his officers at Baraguá have returned, replacing the peasant troops of the Revolutionary *invasión* for reasons one can only speculate about. Might these mutations indicate the national bank's tacit acknowledgment that Cuba is returning, to use Susan Eckstein's (1994) phrase, "back from the future?" And if so, would not the inscription *Cuba será un eterno Baraguá* (Cuba will be an eternal Baraguá) insinuate a rather ominous prospect of perennially deferred redemption; an eternal refusal to capitulate rather than a promise of victory?

Yet irrespective of these symbolic events behind Maceo's back, so to speak, the real trouble is that the contemporary bill is as practically compromised as the one in 1958 was in symbolic terms: its pretensions of representing unrestricted exchange value are not only denied by its automatic conversion into a mere piece of paper once one crosses the border into the international departure lounge at José Martí airport. They are even more blatantly falsified in everyday experience, for possession of nothing but national currency today signifies a painful restriction of legal access to the Cuban national product. Though by 1999, new state-run exchange bureaus featured machines whirring out pristinely crisp twenty-peso bills upon hard currency payment, one would have been hard-pressed to find Cubans who seriously bought into the fantasy that such pieces of paper crystallized any but the most tenacious, volatile, and empirically questionable illusions of value. Even the *peso convertible* (which was becoming rare by 1999) represents an only too well understood practical fiction, standing in for more solidly fetishized instances of the "money form": although Cubans occasionally find themselves forced to use such bills in everyday transactions, everyone seems aware of their brazenly illusory value – and tries to get rid of them. The reason is as simple as it is illustrative of the process by which the breakdown of one regime of make-believe engenders the installation of the next: the common rationale for disposing of *pesos convertibles* is that while hoarded U.S. dollars will presumably never lose their value-storing capacity (backed as they notionally are by the economy of the powerful North American class enemy), the Cuban state can always arbi-

6. Although its origins and functions have, to my knowledge, not been studied, this dollar substitute seems to have originated in an attempt by the state to concentrate its hold on "real dollars," and, one presumes, a concurrent policy to drive out the enormous overhang of unspent pesos without risking further hyperinflation (which was happening anyway) in the national currency sector (Pastor & Zimbalist 1995).

trarily interfere in cash practices underwritten by its self-produced phantom dollar.⁷ Once that fantasy crashes, one might again be left with little more than a piece of paper good enough *para limpiarse el culo*.

The second anecdote is set in Havana in early December of 1994. I had arrived a few weeks earlier, and friends of mine had decided to take me to a *tambor* (Afro-Cuban religious ceremony) for the *vispera* of Santa Barbara held by a faint acquaintance of theirs in the *barrio* of Colón. On the evening before that saint's day on December 4, practitioners of *regla ocha* – a religion with pronounced historical relations to the cultures of Yorùbá-speaking groups in southwestern Nigeria – celebrate Changó, a deity ambiguously if pervasively associated with Santa Barbara. I said “sure,” and so we went.

Colón is a part of Centro Habana notorious for its association, long antedating the Revolution, with what the Cuban government nowadays calls *elementos desvinculados*: people “disconnected” from the socialist state for reasons of individual failure to live up to its collectivist standards, or, to phrase the matter in historically more transcendent terms, because of their presumed moral depravity. It has an interesting history, too. Having grown around one of the major slave markets of Havana,⁸ by the 1830s, it came to house the first Benthamite model prison in the Americas.⁹ By the early twentieth century it had turned into a predominantly black working-class *barrio*, adjoining Centro Habana's commercial center and the cigar factories located just south of its border. By then, at the very latest, it had become an area of ill repute, a zone of shelled nineteenth-century buildings converted into infamously unhealthy *solares* (tenement buildings) overcrowded by dark-skinned, poverty-stricken,

7. This precisely is what could occur once Resolución 80/2004 goes into effect. Since Cubans will find themselves restricted to using the peso convertible for all transactions previously conducted in dollars, the state will be in a position to strategically increase or restrict the amount of circulating currency without regard to the hitherto uncontrollable interference of “hard” U.S. dollars flowing in through remittances from exile, or obtained from tourists. Although it is hard to judge how realistic the possibility of a drastic devaluation of the *chavito* is, it could have devastating consequences for the majority of Cuba's citizens.

8. The *barracones* of which had emerged from army barracks constructed between Calle Consulado and Calle Alameda in 1779. After a large fire in 1822 they were relocated further west to the space between Calle Virtudes and Calle Laguna. The last *barracón* in this area was destroyed in 1836 (de la Torre 1857:77).

9. Its tracts were separated by sex, race, and type of offence, and its design appears to have followed the Benthamite conceptions then gaining ground in Spanish penology. No matter how modern its conception, the jail set up by Governor General Miguel Tacón between 1835 and 1839 was an architectural disaster, becoming physically unstable, and literally undrainable of human waste only years after its initial construction (Chateloin 1989:159-65). That it continued to function as a penal institution until well into the 1930s speaks to the kind of modernity it evidenced.

and politically volatile tenants. Along with Havana's infamous *barrio chino* along la Zanja, and the *barrio de Belén* near the harbor (see Segre, Coyula & Scarpaci 1997:10; Fernández Robaina 1998)¹⁰ it had also come to represent a major center of Havana's spectacular pre-Revolutionary vice industry immortalized by Graham Greene.

All this, of course, was long gone by the time my three friends and I ascended a pitch-dark broken staircase leading to a surprisingly spacious apartment on the fourth floor of a dilapidated tenement building. Nevertheless, there was something about that evening which Graham Greene could have written about far better than me. Like most ethnographers, I have long been used to the way my presence changes the social situations I happen to step into. Light-skinned, blue-eyed, and afflicted with a foreign accent, it is indeed hard to mistake me for a Cuban. Hence, I was all but suprised that as we entered the ceremonial space, what must previously have been various foci of social interaction began to converge on my person. No sooner had my friends and I pushed past the crowd smoking and chatting in the hallway than I was ushered toward the altar display, where I greeted the *oricha* (deity), kneeling down in front of the *trono* (ritual display), shaking a ceremonial rattle, and deposited my *derecho* (ritual dues) in the form of twenty illegally exchanged pesos. We were then led into a large room, where the ceremony proper was taking place. At that point, two deities had taken possession of their devotees, dancing in the characteristic styles of Yemayá and Elegguá. We had lined ourselves up against one of the walls of the room, and after a few minutes one of them, a gaunt young black man incorporating the goddess Yemayá came dancing toward my friends and me. Almost immediately,

10. The origins of Centro Habana's *solares* are discussed in Arriaga Mesa and Delgado Valdés (1995). The horrendous conditions prevalent in such tenements in the twentieth century are vividly documented in Chailloux Cardona (1954:107-55). The count of 1,400 *casas de tolerancia* in Havana published by *La Lucha* in January 1899 was surely exaggerated, though the massive wartime displacement of rural men and women to Havana certainly rendered prostitution a survival strategy for many (Poumier 1975:136). Nevertheless, at the time, 462 such establishments had legally registered with the governmental Sección de Higiene (Elizalde 1996:35). After 1959, it was in "the *barrio* of Colon, the most famous 'tolerance zone' of the Republic" this author continues, that the Revolutionary government initiated "a process of social reinsertion to which almost all persons related to this milieu submitted voluntarily, either for genuine sympathy with the Revolution, or for fear of the open rejection which the popular sectors exhibited toward them" (Elizalde 1996:35). In 1965, prostitution was formally lumped together with other forms of deviance as a "precriminal" condition of "dangerousness" (*peligrosidad*), thus enabling the state to detain and re-educate (e.g., through compulsory agricultural service) persons legally judged to be in such a "condition" without necessary proof of bona fide criminal activity on their part (see Salas 1979:97-103).

he/she focused on me, embracing me and cleansing me with a ceremonial flywhisk. Then the deity stepped back and asked me, "*funmi l'owo*" (give me money), a conventional ritual demand to paste a bill to the possessed person's forehead expressed in *regla ocha*'s ritual language, *lucumi*. I complied by pulling out a peso bill and fixing it onto the sweating surface of the person's forehead – a similarly conventionalized gesture signifying the transformation of the commodity value of a secular bill of exchange into a value-form circulating within a human-divine economy of sacred prestations. But to my friends' and my surprise, no such transvaluation appeared to take place. The deity took a good look at the bill, and returned it to me with the comment that this was not the right kind of *owo*, or, at least, not the kind appropriate to the situation.

In my recollection things seemed to go awry from that moment onward. The person possessed by Elegguá bolted down the stairs and out of the house, and people came rushing after him. Since no one knows what an *oricha* may make his human embodiment do, there was considerable concern about the fact that the ritual scene had begun to spill out onto the street – a source of unimaginable mystical as well as mundane dangers, especially after dark. Stories circulate about possessed people picked up by the police with results leading to endless complications for everyone involved. My friends, at any rate, had had enough after my embarrassing encounter with the young black man incorporating (or pretending to do so) the deity Yemayá. Minutes later we left, and as we walked back to my friends' home in the neighboring *barrio* of San Lázaro, I did my best to convince them that I neither took it as a personal affront, nor was of the opinion that Santería in Cuba had degenerated into a racket.

The man's questioning of the nature of my offering as inappropriate to a situation involving a *yuma* (a popular derogatory term for foreigners) had been a give-away to the simulated nature of his possession by Yemayá. In fact, the strongest confirmation for this was delivered by Erasmo. As we walked back to Marisol's apartment, he emphatically pointed to the thin gold necklace bearing a crucifix he was wearing. "Of all of you here," he said, "and despite of the fact that I am a Jehova's Witness now, I am the only one whose head was ever crowned," – meaning that he, several years before his recent conversion, had undergone the ceremonies of initiation into *regla ocha*. "She should have known it." Adherents of *regla ocha* believe that incorporated deities will immediately recognize initiated devotees regardless of whether or not their priestly status is known to the individual whose body they inhabit. Gods are supposed to ritually salute initiates even though they may not be known to either the host of, or the other participants in, the ceremony. According to this logic, if the man possessed by Yemayá had greeted any of us at all, it should have been

Erasmus, rather than *un aleyo extranjero*, a “profane” foreigner.¹¹ Even though Erasmus was no longer a part of *la religión*, the goddess – had she been genuine – would have immediately recognized that his head had been “crowned,” i.e. that he had undergone the irreversible rite of initiation into *regla ocha* often described as the “coronation” of the neophyte’s head with the regal presence of an *oricha*.

The term my friends used to describe what had happened was that I had come to be the victim of a *santo jinetero*. *Jinetera* or *jinetero* is a term I had learned to associate with a range of rather specific meanings in Cuban public discourse, but it was the first time that I actually encountered it in a context pertaining to religious matters. Since *jineterismo* is roughly translatable as “hustling for dollars” and tends to evoke notions of prostitution, what it implied in this case was that the man’s fake possession in the presence of a financially potent stranger became readable as compromising both the deity’s and my identity: I had turned into the trick of a divine prostitute, or better, perhaps, of an impostor prostituting the deity, or even only its appearance, for monetary gain.¹²

CRISES OF REPRESENTATION

It is to experiences like these – which were neither unusual nor surprising to me then – that this essay and the larger questions to which it aims to speak, owe their intellectual origins. Such questions concern interpretations of the morality of increasingly divergent patterns and relations of exchange and consumption on the background of a fundamental restructuring of the Cuban economy observable today. Cut off from its economic moorings in the former socialist bloc, and afflicted with the continuing U.S. embargo, Cuba is undergoing changes more dramatic than anything that occurred since the Revolution in 1959.¹³ Given the dismal state of the

11. The term *aleyó*, generally used to designate noninitiated persons acting within a religiously defined context, actually means just that: “stranger.”

12. Erasmus’s criteria notwithstanding, one might ask whether the man’s possession behavior might have remained “authentic” had it not been for my presence – for he had already been draped with a blue *pañó* (piece of cloth) substituting for Yemayá’s *ropa de santo* (possession garments). However, as I hope will become clear later in this essay, it would not have made much of a difference: as I will argue, belief, as well as believability, are ultimately intersubjective phenomena.

13. The crisis did not begin with the self-destruction of the USSR, but was anticipated by an increasing souring of relations. As early as 1990, scheduled shipments of petrol, foodstuffs, and technical equipment from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe had already failed to arrive, giving Cubans a first taste of the derailment of the rationing system, the

national economy, which had rested on Soviet-subsidized sugar exports, and the state's financial incapacity to develop adequate import-substitution venues, Cuba has embarked on a socially highly problematic course of frantically developing a tourist industry that was hitherto hardly existent. Growth rates in the tourist sector are staggering, indeed. The number of foreigners visiting Cuba more than doubled between 1990 (340,000) and 1995 (750,000), nearly doubled again in the course of the next three years, and surpassed the two million mark in the year 2000 – a hundred-fold increase over 1971, and still ten times the number that visited Cuba in 1983 (Espino 1993, Martin de Holan & Phillips 1997, LeoGrande & Thomas 2002). As a result Spanish, Canadian, Italian, and British investors in Cuban-foreign joint ventures are currently doing what American hotel chains wish the U.S. Treasury Department would allow them to: stake claims on a potential bonanza.

For Cuba, however, tourism is obviously a mixed blessing. This is not just because the Cuban tourist industry leaks a sizeable amount of the revenue it generates through massive hard currency investments in infrastructural development and imports necessary to maintain international tourist standards.¹⁴ The existence of a tourist sector in the midst of a state-administered economy of scarcity itself is deeply problematic. At the very least, it would seem to add a sharp experiential accent to a situation which functionalist sociology would be likely to reduce to the terms of "relative deprivation theory." For the inadequacy of state-guaranteed rations of primary goods, the legalization of the possession of U.S. dollars in 1993, and the increasing scarcity on the non-dollarized market not just of imported products, but of nonrationed

breakdown of public transport, and the increasing disruption of industrial production which were to come. By 1991, the island was facing a vertiginous economic downward spiral, as an estimated 85 percent of its (always heavily subsidized) trade with the USSR and COMECON vanished into the thin political air from which it had initially materialized (Segre, Coyula, & Scarpaci 1997:141; Font 1997). Cuba's GDP declined fully 25 percent in 1991, 14 percent in 1992, and yet 10 percent more in 1993, fuel shortages caused by a cut in half of Cuba's Soviet petroleum imports within only one year (1989-90) left its major export item, sugar cane, rotting in the fields, and the slight growth rates of 1994 and 1995 (a much celebrated 2.5 percent in the latter year) hardly translated back into an improvement of everyday living conditions (Pastor & Zimbalist 1995, Font 1997, LeoGrande & Thomas 2002).

14. As Font (1997:124) observes, of the US\$ 800 million Cuba grossed in tourism in 1994, it retained a mere US \$250 million. Hence Martin de Holan & Phillips's (1997:790) warning: "if the number of tourists increases fast enough, the short term [hard currency] leakage could rise to the point where the net contribution to Cuba is close to zero, leaving social and environmental problems as the only remaining impact of the ever growing number of tourists."

goods have lead to a situation where deep social rifts are opening up between emerging segments of the population with access to foreign currency, and those who remain restricted to the non-dollarized sectors of the economy to meet their daily needs. Not only do all Cubans have to regularly supplement their state-supplied food rations with national currency cash purchases on state-controlled, but also notoriously over-priced *mercados agropecuarios* (private farmers' markets)¹⁵ – the range of goods available exclusively within the dollarized sector of the Cuban national economy nowadays has come to include a wide variety of foods (most importantly all forms of cooking fats), all products pertaining to personal hygiene, and increasingly also pharmaceutical products.

No less disastrous in their effects upon daily life are the currency exchange relations that developed in the aftermath of the 1993 decision to legalize possession of the U.S. dollar, and the subsequent opening of a second formal market in U.S. currency. Although official exchange rates initially remained pegged at a one-to-one standard, by 1993, the black-market value of the U.S. dollar had shot up to a staggering 120-125 pesos and only slowly declined to 40-45 pesos in 1994 and about 35-40 pesos in 1995.¹⁶ By 1999, the state's CADECA chain of exchange bureaus had achieved the goal of manipulating rather than merely following the black-market fluctuations at a rate then hovering around 20 pesos. Still, what such rates meant in the mid-1990s was that given a salary average of 180 pesos in 1995, and maximum salaries for skilled professionals ranging around 400-450 pesos, a quart of vegetable oil sold in the government-owned *tiendas de recaudación de divisas* (TRD), or more popularly *chopins*,¹⁷ for around US\$ 2.25-2.75 factually represented

15. In fact, the rationing system was never designed to provide a full dietary basis. Rather, the expectation had always been that it would grant an egalitarian distribution of a basic range of government-subsidized products, to be supplemented by similarly subsidized meals at the workplace, school, or daycare center, and individual purchases on the state operated, or, at times, semi-privatized, parallel market. Benjamin, Collins & Scott (1985) provide a sensitive and fair assessment of Cuban nutritional policy and practices before the onset of the crisis. Today it is sadly ironic to read that these authors (as well as Cuban nutritionists), in the mid-1980s, saw obesity as a growing health problem in Cuba.

16. In part, at least, this factual (though not official) devaluation of the peso was a product of hyperinflationary financial policy – once the dollar entered into free circulation, it became clear how “bad” (in Gresham’s sense) the national currency really was.

17. The official designation for these venues as “stores for the recollection of foreign currency” is a blatant give-away of their function which, as Segre, Coyula & Scarpaci (1997:175-76) put it is “not to increase the [consumptive] options available to *habaneros*, but rather to capture the greatest amount of hard currency in order to finance the continuation of the present system” – at a “morally justified” profit margin of an average 240 percent profit exacted by the Cuban state from consumers of fully dollarized products such as, for example, cooking oil, detergent, or tampons.

the equivalent value of a full monthly wage for most industrial workers, and only slightly less for skilled professionals.¹⁸

Through the creation of two virtually separate spheres of commodity circulation visibly demarcated by the formal properties of two distinct monetary media of exchange (pesos vs. dollars), the state radically redefined the meanings of “scarcity” from a failure of effective supply into a failure of effective – i.e. dollar-backed – demand. The unintended but logical consequence was a fundamental unsettling of definitions of the legitimacy of wants. As dollarization unfolded and ramified into the fabric of Cuban social life, former economic crimes transformed into positive consumer virtues. Unregulated association with foreigners (previously constituting a “precriminal” state of “ideological diversionism”) was encouraged, and consuming import goods or nationally produced commodities of export quality changed from a tightly hemmed-in privilege into a question of everyday needs, once the state began to enlist its population in the incessant process of *recaudación* (recollection) of the single good that ensures its existence and perdurance in the post-cold war era: the U.S. dollar.

In this sense, it is ironic testimony to the disintegration of the Cuban public sphere to see what even a casual visitor to Havana in the mid-1990s could not help but note: the mutation of forms of social practice criminalized as late as the end of the 1980s into de facto elements of an increasingly bipolar, and highly ambivalent culture of struggle (*lucha*) – the socialist *lucha* for a better society, and the day-to-day *lucha* to get by. An obvious example is the still reigning Law No. 1231 (*Ley contra la vagancia*) passed by the Council of Ministries in 1971. Subsuming loafing, unsteady work habits, and outright theft under the category of social parasitism, its definition (quoted in Pérez-López 1995:72-74) nowadays fits the economic strategies a vast number of people deploy to merely get by.¹⁹

18. These data are necessarily impressionistic. In contrast to the 1989 data given by Pérez-López (1995:57), it would appear that the average salary range seems to have become broader. Still, Segre, Coyula & Scarpaci's (1997:229-30) comparison of the purchasing power of the legal wages of manual laborers, physicians, university professors, and taxi drivers on Havana's black market in the summer of 1994 amply demonstrates that the *Guevarist* theory of moral incentives and individual sacrifice for the common good is fast losing relevance in a world where the purchase of a unit of lard costs the manual laborer a full monthly salary, consumes 16 percent of that of a physician, perhaps 20 percent of a professor's, but only 1 percent of the driver of a state-owned or legalized taxi. See LeoGrande & Thomas (2002:352) for similar comparisons.

19. This and the following remarks are not meant to assert a radical qualitative break. On the contrary, as in the rest of the second world, Cuba's Revolutionary economy had long, perhaps always, contained a burgeoning informal sector (see Pérez-López 1995). The major difference is quantitative and would seem to lie in a) the degree of experiential “routinization” of officially criminalized practices in everyday life, and b) the government's seeming acknowledgement that a systematic crackdown would only exacerbate the critical nature of urban food supply, and thus prove politically costly.

Due to the erratic nature of the distribution of rationed goods and off-ration products (*productos en venta por la libre*) in state-run bodegas, unsteady work habits have become a strategy for obtaining (*conseguir*), “resolving” (*resolver*) or, as the most characteristic popular expression has it, “inventing” (*inventar*) basic commodities. Since the amount of basic foods allocated to households on the rationing system does not meet monthly nutritional requirements, most people have to begin purchasing even such basic staples as rice and legumes on the parallel market at least midway into the allocation period. Given the virtual normalization of food-related anxieties in daily life, it is toward the end of the rationing period that the daily struggle of *consiguiendo* and *resolviendo* – investigating potential food sources, beating others to a good place in the lines in front of outlets, strategically stocking up on what is available in order to later be able to *trocar* (barter), reaches a frantic pitch. At such times, Cubans say, the adage *el que no trabaja no come* (he who doesn’t work doesn’t eat) turns into its opposite: *el que trabaja no come*, he who works doesn’t eat. Phrased differently, since acquiring even the most basic foodstuffs has become a pursuit demanding extreme expenditures not just of effort, but of time, work, as Segre, Coyula and Scarpaci (1997:242) put it, nowadays “carries an opportunity cost previously irrelevant in the socialist workplace,” but unaffordable to many people in present-day Havana.²⁰

The emerging division between dollarized and non-dollarized spheres of social life comes to the fore most blatantly in localities where there is a regular presence of tourists. This is so not just because routine tourist consumption patterns and expenditures would trigger the kind of Pavlovian reactions known as “demonstration effects” (so beloved by Western economics and political science as an explanans for the Eastern European “revolutions”). More realistically, in the Cuban case such localities (often designated as *el área dollar*) create a perceptual warp that merely distorts

20. The term *inventar* expresses this most clearly, for it designates acts of obtaining goods and commodities otherwise out of reach by means most likely to be judged devious. The phrase is often used jokingly, but also in situations of despair. *Inventar* is a special form of the semantically broader terms *resolver* (resolve) or *solucionar* (find a solution for), terms which have come to frame a broad spectrum of everyday activities in Cuba’s “special period.” Food, transportation, clothing, toothpaste, razorblades, soap: everything the state does not provide, or provides erratically or in insufficient quantity within the national currency sector has to be “resolved.” “Inventing” things has slightly different connotations. “I have to invent a few dollars to buy my daughter new sneakers” someone might say (*tengo que inventar unos dólares para comprarle un par de tenis para mi hija*), meaning that the act of accessing such funds might demand special, perhaps illegal, forms of effort. When someone admits to having “invented” a scarce commodity, one does not ask how, unless one is on close terms.

local social alignments by suggesting the existence of alternatives generated from within a tourism-based state that remains nominally socialist while increasingly combining the worst of two worlds in an oddly Caribbean pattern of hybridization. Tourist zones not only generate state-controlled employment, promising access to dollars (even if only in the form of tips), but a vast informal sector of no-less-tourist-oriented activities epitomized by the virtual explosion of cash-mediated forms of sociality epitomized by the neologism *jineterismo*. Some of the most obvious manifestations of *jineterismo* entail the exchange of sexual services for money, and from a structural perspective, *jineterismo*, indeed, strongly resembles forms of dollar prostitution observable in situations where a supply of sexual services is triggered by a demand backed by a value form far superior in its capacity to generate "exchange entitlements" (Sen 1981) to those money forms against which other types of services can be exchanged. Nevertheless, in popular speech, *jineterismo* is almost universally distinguished from its ostensible cognate *prostitución*. Moreover, it is consistently represented as (and, one presumes, felt to be) new – new, that is, not only in quantitative relation to the probably extremely limited forms of individual prostitution existing before the onset of dollarization,²¹ but also qualitatively different from prerevolutionary patterns of organized sex work. *Prostitución*, people will say, *había antes. Ahora tenemos jineteras* (prostitution existed before [the Revolution]. Today we have *jineteras*).

Comprising not only the informal, "disorganized" (O'Connell Davidson 1996:45) sale of sexual services, but shading into other, far more diffuse and ambiguous transactional patterns and relationships,²² *jineterismo* is predominantly construed, both in scarce official statements and in a burgeoning popular discourse on the matter, not in relation to poverty or deprivation of essential goods. The term *jineterismo* rather speaks to morally highly ambiguous notions about commoditized exchange, luxury consumption, and the creation of social identities through processes of objectification. Already the very term *jinetera* (and its male equivalent *jinetero*) invites such interpretations. Deriving from the word for a jockey (*jinete*) the concept circumscribes a vision of the *jinetera* rather far removed from Western

21. On this issue see Fernández Robaina (1998) and Fusco (1998).

22. In addition, the spectrum of activities associated with *jineterismo* in the imagination of *Habaneros* is clearly gendered. While male prostitution (both hetero- and homosexual) of a more or less casual character undoubtedly forms part of it, women to whom the term *jinetera* is applied are much more likely to be thought of offering sexual services than men who are hustling tourists in a variety of, oftentimes far less stigmatized, ways. Particularly because the subject of male hustling has been consistently silenced in Cuban public discourse (though not in private conversations), in the following, I will restrict myself to the more obviously sexualized notions about female *jineterismo*.

common-sense notions of the political economy of sex work. In contemporary popular Cuban understanding, the *jinetera* is not just a depersonalized object of tourist desire, and her sexuality is not a mere object of commodified exchange. Rather, popular discourse inverts this imagery by casting the person engaging in *jineterismo* as an agent who literally “rides,” “spurs,” and “whips the money” out of his or, more often, her “victim,” whose desire he or she has aroused for purely instrumental motives. The underlying assumption is that the *jinetera se monta al extranjero* (literally mounts, but also possesses, the stranger), *le apasiona* (impassions him) or even *le castiga* (literally punishes, but also roughs him up)²³ to an extent where he becomes dependent upon her, turns into a patient of his own desire, and abandons control over his financial means.

Rather than being cast as a victim of unequal economic exchange, or stigmatized along the lines of traditional views of prostitution as the ultimate form of female dishonor, the *jinetera* is envisioned as engaged in a process of value extraction over which she is thought to exert considerable control. Contrariwise, and irrespective of the exploitation many women experience at the hands of renters of illegal rooms, bribed “protectors” in the official sector, or the clients themselves, in the popular imagination it is the tourist’s personhood which becomes reduced to an objectified source of hard cash, imported clothing, household goods, electronic appliances, high-quality foods, and last, but by no means least, entertainment in bars, restaurants, or cabarets inaccessible to Cubans without adequate supply of foreign currency and, increasingly so, without visibly foreign company.

The official position on the matter tends to support such interpretations. Since there is, by definition, no need to engage in prostitution in a socialist state, these women and men engage in forms of entrepreneurialism centered on their body as a marketable commodity. Such behavior, government statements imply, is motivated by greed and the socially reprehensible desire for superfluous foreign luxury goods. As Elizalde (1996:25) puts it, articulating a variant of the official position of the matter,

the prostitution of today is, by and large, not a desperate survival strategy, but rather a reflex of the rupture of spiritual values on the social level – a logical consequence of the economic crisis we are passing through – which nowadays renders tolerable what was inadmissible in the past, fortifies the western model of consumption, and bears results consistent with the diverse levels of social consciousness and subjectivity which make people react to the same problem in different ways.

23. Much of Cuban sexual vocabulary has fairly violent connotations, though most of such terms pertain to male activities in sexual conquest and intercourse. See Moreno Friginals (1978, II:40) for an intriguing, but rather simplistic theory of the origins of parts of such terminology in the context of plantation slavery.

Worse yet, such ruptures do not remain restricted to those directly involved in the practice of *jineterismo*. If, in popular speech, the term *jinterismo* largely fails to convey the sense of stigma and spoiled identity commonly associated with the concept of prostitution, this, Elizalde (1996:70) argues, appears not just a result of the "refusal of those involved to accept it as a stigma," but rather the outcome of what she calls a much broader "process of semantic accommodation [of the term's connotations] to a certain culture of resolving [*resolver*], of the struggle [*de la lucha*]."

Nevertheless, up to 1996, police toleration was blatant, and even after the major crackdowns of late 1990s,²⁴ to many Cubans it seems clear that *jine-terismo* functions to funnel much-needed foreign currency into the national economy. In this respect, *jineterismo* partly falls in line with a whole spectrum of forms of social intercourse mediated by dollarized cash-practices such as new state-licensed forms of private enterprise offering both goods and services for U.S. dollars (or its black-market-rate equivalent in national currency), and bona fide illegal activities (sale of "diverted" state property or stolen goods). These, as well as *jineterismo* and its various nonsexualized permutations, have begun to circumscribe new and blatantly postsocialist identities, such as that of the *bisnero* (from business), or that of the *vasilón* (from *vasilar*, to party, with the connotation of reckless hedonism).

THE PRODUCTION OF STRANGERS

Such new identities and the forms of sociality to which they refer are, to a certain extent and in certain contexts, represented as morally reprehensible. This has to do with widespread, and by no means unfounded, perceptions of the forms of exchange and patterns of consumption underwriting and objectifying such emergent identities as implying not just the systematic failure of redistributive mechanisms (this tends to be blamed on the increasingly chaotic nature of the Cuban public sphere itself), but a willful failure to reciprocate as well. Partly, such conceptions recur to representations of the common good, social justice, and responsibility which may be traceable to revolutionary ideologies of the relation between the individual and the state. But they also index an array of older genres of nationalist representations of Cuban solidarity (Martí's *con todos y para el bien de todos*, with everyone and for the good of everyone), and a variety of notions of personal intimacy,

24. Which, by and large, merely drove the women off the street, and into the arms of the waiters at hotel lounges and tourist discos, who often seem only too happy to protect them from the police and state security for a substantial cut. The result was little more than what one might call the "return of the *chulo* (pimp)."

honor, and that complex conceptual device for measuring social worth and individual integrity Cubans call *respeto*.

Es una falta de respeto (it is a lack of respect) is probably the worst thing you can say about somebody's behavior in Cuba without taking recourse to outright abusive invectives. For *una falta de respeto*, in effect, abrogates the minimal definition of individual worth which a decent person should always grant his or her interactional partners as a fundamental right, regardless of their origins, social standing, economic situation, or personal characteristics (gender, skin-color, etc.). To engage in disrespectful behavior implies that the person so slighted cannot command respect, a grave insult under all circumstances. Nevertheless, forms of impugning the dignity of others proliferate. In part, this is so because individuals and domestic groups forced to rely on national currency face a severe reduction of their "exchange entitlements" not just within the market sphere proper, but in respect to the circulation of goods and services within informal exchange networks between households, and even among their members. Since exchange within such networks is predicated on the ideal of *cariño* (mutual affection), the capacity to disperse the suspicion of *interés* (selfish intentionality) by acts of generosity is a paramount requirement for maintaining one's status as a participant. This, however, is becoming an increasingly difficult chore: hastily tucking away food when the neighbor who smelled it knocks on the door rather than freely offering it; descending upon relatives with open demands for favors they know they cannot refuse rather than politely insinuating a personal need; or, conversely, refusing gifts and hospitality out of fear of having to reciprocate rather than taking on the moral responsibilities accruing from acceptance – such distortions of expected forms of social conduct cumulatively work to erode people's public standing as *buena gente* (good people) and increasingly disengage them from the structures within which moral obligations are appropriately contracted and discharged.

But the effects of this process ramify even further. People become shameless (*gente sin vergüenza*) not just in respect to the maintenance of social relations. Shamelessness threatens to pervade their bodily self. By the mid-1990s, popular jokes had it that you could always tell who was a state employee by looking at his shoes: the cheap Chinese canvas sneakers (*tenis*) were always just about to fall apart. More damaging versions of such jokes said that you could smell loyal participants in the formal socialist economy because they had no access to soap, a gross insult in a society where people try to take showers at least twice a day, and where the presentation of one's body as clean (*limpio*) and aesthetically pleasing (*buen cuerpo*) forms an important technique for the maintenance of both a respectable social self and a sense of individual dignity. The moral privilege of occupying a position in the Revolutionary vanguard has come to translate into a bodily reality of eating what was formerly regarded as trash and relinquishing con-

trol over crucial physical aspects of one's own social self. It is, thus, no accident that, in the early 1990s, Fidel demonstratively ate a fish filet in front of running cameras (fish is a protein source Cubans traditionally do not appreciate), or that the Cuban TV cook Nitza Villapoll reportedly gave out recipes for marinating and frying grapefruit peel as a substitute for meat (or, rather, as a substitute for the "utility" of meat, not as its nutritional equivalent).²⁵ Like a bad host, the epitome of what Cubans characterize as *gente sin vergüenza*, who impugns the dignity of his guests by serving bad food or leftovers, the state forces its loyal citizens to eat what they consider the food of the indigent (reduced to fish in Havana's incredibly dirty bay for food), or outright trash (*basura*).

What Lemon (1998) in the Russian context calls a "crisis of representation" occasioned by a dual currency system undermining conceptions of value that were previously taken for granted, thus spills over from the economic sphere into the domains of social status and personal worth. If the peso, for some, has become a piece of paper that one can wipe one's ass with, the real danger is that others will find themselves degraded through contamination with an infested medium of exchange, and their selfhood reduced to that of a *cubano que vale nada* (a Cuban worth noting) or un *cubano de mierda* (a shitty Cuban). The "special period," in other words, has turned into a machine which cranks out deformed selves and morally distorted social relations.

As Elias Canetti (1973:186) put it in his reflections on the connection between the economic crisis of the 1930s and the increasingly violent nature of anti-Semitism in Germany, what Cuba faces these day is a "witches' Sabbath of devaluation where men and the units of their money have the strangest effects upon each other." The result is what he calls "a dynamic of humiliation."

"Something," Canetti says, "must be treated in such a way that it becomes worth less and less, as the unit of money did during the inflation. And this process must be continued until its object is reduced to utter worthlessness. Then one can throw it away like paper, or repulp it."

In Zygmunt Bauman's (1997) terms, what we observe in Cuba today is not just the marginalization and disempowerment of those who, because of their structural position, fail to cope with systemic problems increasingly redefined as individual ones. Rather, we are witnessing their transformation into what Bauman calls "strangers," people increasingly being defined out of the moral community constituted by what Bauman (1997:45) calls an advancing tyranny of the "economically correct."

Such dynamics seem evident in the rich growth of racializing signifiers surrounding the emerging "moral economies" of dollarized exchange

25. Adding insult to injury, she apparently failed to explain what to do with them when one cannot afford frying fats.

and consumption in Havana these days. On the one hand it appears that the general disarray of the public sphere in Cuban life, and the operation of the economic factors outlined before, is beginning to seriously erode the hegemonic force (or whatever there was left of it in 1989) of the state's taboo on race as a subject of public discourse. On the other hand, there are far more concrete factors at work as well. Due to tourist demand, the commodification of Cuban sexuality proceeds along an axis defined by racial stereotypes (which, however, are only partly in congruence with popular Cuban racial categorizations), and is consequently imagined as linked to social conceptions of "blackness." In the popular imagination, the figure epitomizing *jinetismo* is not the classy mulatta whose body traditionally formed the screen for projections of Cuban sexual fantasies. It is the very dark-skinned girl from the countryside or some solidly black barrio of Havana, whose vulgarity and awkward comportment (one stereotype is that she cannot even walk on high heels) immediately give her away as black trash.

Rather similarly, the rising incidence of tourist-targeting street crime (another basically new economic venue born out of the conjunction of experienced scarcity and a recklessly developed tourist industry) in Havana is being constructed in terms of long-standing and culturally deeply ingrained representations of blackness as linked to a lack of discipline and civic virtue, greed, hedonism, etc.²⁶ The incipient emergence of class-like relations between groups with differential access to the dollarized sector of the economy, thus, strongly appears to correlate with forms of othering based on racial ascriptions. Increasingly, the question "to what degree will people individually compromise themselves morally in order to access *el fula* (dollar) is being rephrased as one about the identity of groups whose imputed low standards of morality and civic virtue will predispose them to engage in economies of prostitution and predation. The tragic result of this is that irrespective of whether a notionally "black" woman comports herself awkwardly because she is a *palestina* (a term used for illegal residents of Havana whose origins lie in the eastern provinces) trying to find a *papi riqui con*

26. This is not the place to discuss the cultural particularities of Cuban racism (which, despite a relative wealth of literature on Cuban "race relations," have, so far, not received adequate anthropological attention). For exploratory treatments of the issue of post-Revolutionary patterns of Cuban racism see Booth (1976) and Fernández (1996). Some of Lancaster's (1992) insight into the Nicaraguan situation seem applicable, too. At any rate, some "hard facts" are involved as well: since the sociology of emigration from Revolutionary Cuba brought a disproportionately large amount of "white" Cubans to the United States (Aguirre 1976), the likelihood that a Cuban socially identified as black will have access to dollar remittances from family members in exile is slim. As a result, black Cubans not only have to struggle harder to gain access to dollars, the general presumption tends to be that if they possess foreign currency, it will be ill-gotten.

guaniquiqui (sugar daddy – thus the title of one of Manolin “El Medico de la Salsa’s” hits in 1995), or because she is simply embarrassed by the situation, or whether a male “black” teenager approaches tourists because he *really* wants to know the time, rather than pick their pocket, they both contribute to what, with Appadurai (1998), we might call an increasing somatic rendering of political-economic identities.

In a situation where the dollar increasingly appears to possess the power to commensurate any and all values, even bodily surfaces have become deceptively overdetermined: just like the wildly fluctuating exchange value of Cuba’s five-peso bill renders Maceo’s countenance a questionable indicator of value, so have physical appearances begun to function as inherently suspect denominators of individual worth. Hence the seeming need to disambiguate the identity of those who participate in this moral universe along essentialized “racial” fault lines that suggest themselves in spite of all past Revolutionary endeavors at doing away with the political-economic realities from which they once issued forth, and to which they now seem to return.²⁷

SACRED AND SECULAR ECONOMIES IN A “SPECIAL PERIOD IN TIMES OF PEACE”

Among practitioners of Afro-Cuban religions another set of interpretations obtains in uneasy coexistence with the popular perceptions recounted up to now. Within their symbolic universe, the process of moralizing emergent patterns of dollarized exchange and consumption, as well as the forms of identity they are seen to enable and objectify, are informed by notions of mystical causality in addition to (and sometimes in conflict with) mundane ones. And they articulate with a discourse on the morality of certain forms of sociality between human and non-human actors. Space does not permit me to adequately flesh out this issue. But as I have argued elsewhere (Palmié 2002:159-200), representations of differences in the conception of possible relationships with non-human actors (i.e. deities and the spirits of the dead) in several socially overlapping component traditions of, what I prefer to call, an overall Afro-Cuban religious formation, are currently being deployed to signify the experienced brittleness of moral consensus in day-to-day life in Havana in a manner analytically far more acute than the sociologicistic vocabulary much postsocialist anthropology seems beholden to.

The fault lines here seem to run between ideas about exchanges between devotees and deities (*oricha*) in the Yoruba-derived traditions (*regla ocha*),

27. I owe this insight to Brad Weiss’s comments on an earlier version of this essay.

and those between priestly manipulators of power objects known as *ngangas* or *prendas*, and conceived of as containing the spirit of a dead human being. The latter cults are usually collectively denominated *reglas de congo*, but have various names such as *palo monte*, *mayombe*, *kimbisa*, *villumba*, etc. Different from *regla ocha*, these are commonly thought to present to their believers a kind of slippery slope ranging from the cult of spirits of the dead through the manipulation of their powers for therapeutic ends to the outright coercion of superhuman powers for amoral purposes that converge on classical European notions of necromantic witchcraft. In the ostensibly more benignly oriented (one is tempted to say “expressive” rather than “instrumental”) Yoruba-influenced tradition of *regla ocha*, ritual interaction between the gods and their devotees condenses idealized notions of sociality centering on images of kinship, nurturance, and generalized reciprocity, and foregrounding the volition of the gods. In the *reglas de congo*, the relation between a *tata nganga* (priest) and the spirit (*nfumbi*) contained in the *nganga* object is surrounded by an imagery of contractual labor and payment, enslavement, domination, and revolt. It provides an idiom, and arguably does so for historical reasons (Palmié 2002), for a discourse on violence and depersonalization through the agency of objects which appears to speak to the current experiences of many Cubans.

In this respect, conceptions of ritual labor and sacrificial consumption in the two systems, and the manner in which these are affected by the current economic and social transformations crucially differentiate the perceptions of the two religious regimes, just as they, in another sense are blurring the practical distinctions between them. Afro-Cuban religious practices traditionally entail monetized exchanges. These, however, are linked to elaborate theories about ritual labor and its role in the conversion of commercial forms of value into mystical ones. Briefly, such are the foundations of the human-divine commonwealth defined by *regla ocha*: in line with what Karin Barber (1981) has noted for the Yoruba, toward whom the origins of this component of the Afro-Cuban religious formation have consistently been traced, the “sociological truism [that] gods are made by men, not men by gods” is very much part of the theology of *regla ocha*. “Without the collaboration of their devotees,” says Barber (1981:724), “the *òrìsà* (gods) would be betrayed, exposed and reduced to nothing.”²⁸ Though possessing awesome powers, the Afro-Cuban *oricha* are dependent on human attention. Their existence is predicated on forms of knowledge “embodied” (Lambek 1993:307) by their devotees in ritual work

28. As denizens of heaven, Barber’s informants in Òkukù agreed: the *òrìsà* enjoy infinite powers. Still, they say that “the face of a denizen of heaven is ‘awo’ [charged with secret power] for the very reason that if you removed its costume you might find nothing there” (Barber 1981:740).

(*trabajar ocha*) and routine everyday experience of interaction with the divine – a few *centavos* tossed for Elegguá at a street corner, a sip of rum spilled on the floor for the ancestors, but also a skin rash read as a sign from Babalu Ayé, or a sudden monetary windfall understood as a grace bestowed by Ochún.²⁹

Animal sacrifices and other offerings, thus, circulate toward the gods in an ongoing series of ritual prestation by means of which humans lock the *oricha* into moral relationships notionally modeled on reciprocity among kin, but closely resembling forms of surplus extraction in relations of patronage. By appropriating and consuming ritual labor in the form of sacrifices and ceremonies, the *oricha* accumulate the power (*aché*) which enables them to uphold the order of the world. But they also implicitly contract the obligation to redistribute in a manner which ensures the “goodness” of their devotee’s lives, and so drives the sacrificial economy in which *aché* circulates through cycles of “upward delivery” and “downward redistribution.” There is, of course, nothing mechanical about such cycles. Nor could there be, for the gods can, and occasionally do refuse offerings. They are willful, sometimes intransigent beings, who have to be coaxed into granting favors, just as they, at times, need to be seduced into accepting an offering. The flow of *aché* from humans to gods, thus, must be confirmed by divination, lest a puddle of chicken blood in a calabash remain just that: a rejected invitation to enter a moral, not just contractual, relationship. Ritual is always dialogic, and the conjunction between human ritual labor and divine sacrificial consumption is cooperative effort, effected by a fundamental transformation of their shared object which converts its value from mundane forms into mystical ones.

To speak with Appadurai (1986), the very role of ritual, in this respect, is to lift an object from one “regime of value” into another, radically different one. Representing an interface between sacred and secular spheres, *oricha* shrines and altars similarly function as converters or relays between different domains of value.³⁰ The money deposited in front of a ceremonial display notionally is

29. Gods angered by neglect will visit their subjects with disease, misfortune, poverty, or sheer disorder in their day-to-day lives. It is the one resource they have for keeping the people who preserve them in line. On a larger scale, inattention leads to attrition, or, put differently, to the disarticulation of knowledge and embodiment: there are gods whose names are still known, but who have stopped descending upon people because their songs and drum rhythms have been forgotten; others have ceased to communicate through divination because they are no longer recognized as speaking through certain oracular constellations (*odu*). In other cases, knowledge of appropriate sacrifices to certain deities has been lost, dooming them to a ghostly existence as remembered objects of former belief with whom no meaningful exchange can take place anymore.

30. Full-fledged (nonesoteric) possession ceremonies, *tambores* or *bembés*, always include the assembly, and ritual dismantling, of what adherents of *regla ocha* call a *plaza* (literally market) in front of the ceremonial display of the *oricha*’s objectifications proper.

the *derecho* (literally, the right) of the deity in whose honor the ceremony is staged. It is to be used by the priest who organized the event only for expenditures within a sacred economy of prestations toward the deity which are eventually returned in the form of good fortune, health, and happiness. To be sure, priestly incomes are rarely discussed in public, unless, that is, to malign an opponent. Nevertheless, to allocate such monies to other purposes is regarded as an extreme manifestation of *interés* (selfish intentionality) tantamount to a failure to reciprocate for reasons of greed. It is, besides everything else, a fundamental *falta de respeto* toward a deity which shares in the attributes of human persons to the degree that its integrity can be impugned.

Hence the outrageous nature of the simulation of "upward conversion" effected through fake possession in the case recounted earlier. In the context in which it took place, the ritual demand of money on the part of the deity ought to have divested the bill of much of its function as a multipurpose commodity and to have charged it with mystical forms of value not redeemable (at least theoretically) within a secular exchange sphere. This, of course, is not what happened. Instead of crossing over into a sacred domain of value, the money never left the sphere of commoditized exchanges. The man's imposturing foiled the fundamental function of the ritual gesture: to convert money into a gift circulating within a sacred economy. However, possessed as he might have been by the spirit of rational self-interest, the *santo jine-tero* effected more than what Appadurai (1986) calls the calculated "diversion" of objects from normative circulatory "paths" of restricted equivalence. On a more fundamental level, and in a far more damaging way, his actions appeared to expose the arbitrariness, and, indeed, conventional nature of the boundaries between the moral universes of *derecho* and *interés*, between cosmic reciprocity and selfish gain, sacred hunger and mundane greed.³¹

As Brown (1989, 1993) has cogently argued, *oricha* altars themselves emblematically visualize the workings of a redistributory economy. Speaking about the circulatory velocity with which commercially purchased items transform into "gifts to the *oricha*," and back again into divinely charged "use values," Brown (1993:54) notes for the North American case that "Gifts initially made to the *oricha* cycle back to refresh the givers anew with food that has absorbed the *orichas'* *aché* ... By the end of the evening the mat of the throne [on which the *oricha's* *plaza* was originally laid out] is virtually defoliated. Within thirty-six hours its contents have traveled from supermarket bins to the throne – from actual *plaza* (market) to the throne's *plaza*; have been presented to the *orichas* and then reciprocated, to be eaten immediately or taken home, often in the same shopping plastic or brown paper bag used to purchase the fruit in the first place. The fruit taken home is eaten by the guests' family and friends in an exponential spreading of the *oricha's* blessing."

31. In ethnographic terms, a different interpretation is, of course, thinkable, for what if Yemayá, for whatever divine reasons of her own, would have refused to accept an offer in national currency from me? To me, my friends' embarrassment over the event would

THE IMPASSIONED STATE

Fake possession is neither new nor uncommon in Afro-Cuban religion, and practitioners are generally well aware of its occasional occurrence. Still, what priests perceive as an aggravating, and potentially dangerous tendency of some people to “use” the disguise of a deity for personal projects presents some of the most tricky analytical problems in as far as the concepts of self, personhood, and body in Afro-Cuban religion is concerned. A possessing deity is thought to completely displace the individuality and volition of the possessed person, “mounting” (*montar*) and “steering” (*manejar*) the material shell of his or her body, which then recognizably displays the behavioral characteristics of the deity. The possessed body whose head (*cabeza*) has been filled with the god merely looks human. During possession the human medium is present only in the form of matter (*en su materia*) agitated by divine will. Descended gods sometimes demonstrate their full control over their human “mount” (*caballo*) by using its body in potentially harmful ways without actually hurting it.³² An impostor, however, turns into a simulacrum of a divine presence while retaining his or her mundane volition. If the possessed body looks like a human, but moves and speaks with divine authority, the body of the impostor enacts an image of the divine, but communicates from the profane structures of intentionality of his or her self.³³

Fake possession, thus, always threatens to effect the breakdown of the category of the sacred by profuse slippage of meanings from one domain into the other. But it does more than just that. As Lydia Cabrera has argued, in

seem to rule out such an interpretation. That, of course, says nothing about how other people present at the occasion might have understood it. But this precisely may be the larger point: the constituency of any public event may reasonably be presumed to consist of several, perhaps only partly overlapping “communities of interpretation.”

32. I have often seen gods smash glasses and plates and then trample upon the shards with their bare feet. In one particularly impressive performance I witnessed in Miami in 1985, a man possessed by Ogún, one of the few deities who will drink alcohol, downed almost a full bottle of *aguardiente* before beginning to dance through a room tightly packed with people while brandishing a sharpened machete. I could sense the unease of some of the participants in the ritual, but most of them tried not to flinch as the blade came swishing by their cheeks, thereby stabilizing the reality of the possession scene. Since it is the god who does the drinking, I was later told, the medium does not suffer from a hangover after even such extreme intake of alcohol.

33. This moment provides a key ingredient to the classic anthropological interpretations of possession as a compensatory (or contestatory) form of “role playing” for which Lewis (1971) provides a canonical text. See Boddy (1994) and Lambek (1996) for overviews of recent attempts to cast off the yoke of psychological functionalism in anthropological studies of spirit possession. A good example for this emerging genre in an African-American context is Wafer (1991).

practice, such slippage tends to be contained by a variety of strategies aimed at neutralizing the ideological effects of incidences of what she calls “sacred scam.” Ostensibly paradoxical in their implications for the closure of the ritual moment as a “finite province of meaning,” such strategies, in Cabrera’s (1983:38-39) view, grow out of the “psychological need” to believe

that the gods have come down, to believe [this] for the whole duration of the ceremony: to believe and make believe so that [others] believe until the last false *oricha* is [ritually] dismissed. When truth is found lacking, one must conform with the lie which is what the saying “without bread, cassava” [*a falta de pan, casabe*] expresses.

Cabrera’s theory of the “reality” of false possession as a product of collective displacement is cast in unnecessarily psychologistic and patronizing terms (see Kramer 1993:58-60; Lambek 1993:305-37). Nevertheless, it finds astounding resonances in Žižek’s (1997:86-126) analysis of commodity fetishism as resting not so much on a mere ideological (or structural) illusion than on the necessary imputation of “belief” to others – an externalizing move that stabilizes the effects moral artefacts such as money, god, socialism, etc., are experienced to have on everyday social relations. “[T]he subject who directly believes,” Žižek (1997:108) argues, “need not exist for the belief to be operative: it is enough precisely to *presuppose* its existence” – or, in other words, to project a socially effective semblance. This is not to say that gods and the spirits of dead people do not intervene in people’s lives, nor to deny the reality of possession. Like the invisible hand of the market guiding the enactment of private vice as public virtue, or the dazzling clarity of revolutionary truths which seize the consciousness of the proletariat, *oricha* and *nfumbi* obviously exist. They all do, insofar (and as long) as their presence and agency can be experienced and are routinely socially acted upon (even if only as a felt need to take into account the pernicious effects of ideological mystifications which motivate others to do all the wrong things).

Rather, what Žižek’s suggestions imply is that the occasional breakdown of believability adds to, indeed can be made to represent an excess performance of, that which forms the essential object of belief: the fact that all mercantile exchanges are empirically overdetermined by a multitude of extra-economic considerations has never deterred economists from the belief in the market as a *phenomenon* or *force* which could be analyzed as if it represented a sphere of agency (and even an agent) fundamentally separated from all those noneconomic aspects of social life which it allegedly structures and shapes. Likewise, even though “actually existing socialism” is perennially flawed – too much centralism, too much voluntarism, excessive bureaucratic growth, lack of revolutionary consciousness, maldistribution of resources, low productivity (some evil is always afoot) – none of this vitiates, indeed, it even confirms, the truths

of Marxist-Leninist dialectics. And, more importantly, it can be experienced as such, if and when one's world is conceived as "transitional."³⁴

Kramer's (1993) and Lambek's (1993) reformulation of Godfrey Lienhardt's interpretation of Dinka conceptions of the experience of being overwhelmed by forms of selfhood and agency originating outside the individual (what Lienhardt calls *passiones*) is useful here. For in the case at hand, the reality of spirit possession – states of being where the self becomes a patient of the divinely willed actions its body performs – builds not just on the concept of the autonomous "self-possessed" individual as the locus of secular agency, *but* upon the chance of the invasion of secular intentionality into the realm of the sacred.³⁵ For how, other than by the *social* effects of the semantic work that vessels of the divine and self-possessed individuals perform, can gods and humans be told apart? How else to distinguish "money" from worthless paper, the home from the marketplace, marriage from prostitution, gifts from commodities, truth from ideology, legitimate exercise of force from sheer terror? Precisely because his or her self is displaced by a numinous entity, a person possessed by an *oricha* or *nfumbi* is supposed not to remember, nor be in any way involved in scripting, the plot the deity's or spirit's actions spin out of the expressive potential of his or her body. In theory, the divine performance is a total fact, completely devoid of human subjectivity and authorship.³⁶ Yet, at least in the episode

34. Hence the problem of officially declaring the attainment of a "state of socialism" (or, worse yet, communism), to wit the horrors of Stalinist repression which were arguably predicated on such definitional moves whose function is to irreversibly divorce doctinary logic from experience (see Arendt 1968:167-69).

35. See Wafer (1991:103) who argues that "it is possible for adherents of Candomblé and social scientists to offer explanations of trance that involve essentially the same determinism. The correct way of talking about trance in Candomblé is to refer to people as logical patients whose behavior is controlled by spirits. When social scientists give Durkheimian explanations of trance, as reflecting particular aspects of the social order, they transpose the 'mystical' explanation to a 'material' plane." Functionalism, as we know now, was an intellectual machine full of ghosts.

36. Possession, in this sense, shares numerous features with a form of discourse concerned with how the present transcends, yet is beholden to the past: historiography. At the very least, neither of them can accommodate rumors distending their performative claims to plausibility or veracity into semantic domains inappropriate to its structures of signification. Just as the Western historian cannot dream up events (or take dream events seriously) without compromising the foundational notion of an objectively given past (see Trouillot 1995), so "true" possession cannot accommodate forms of subjectivity muddling the instantiation of an object of belief (a deity, a spirit) with historical action in the classical sense of expressions of rational self-interest by a human subject. In both cases, it seems, subjectivity and intentionality must be dispersed (if in different directions) or otherwise brought under social control.

recounted, the potential for semantic ruptures was centered less on Cabrera's (1983:38) metaphor for fake possession as a "horse without jockey" (*caballo sin jinete*), than on an unsettling of the metonymic linkage itself, and its dissipation into mere metaphor: not just the possibility that the horse may walk away with the jockey in unprecedented, and morally troubling, ways, but the breakdown of the distinction itself into fearful indeterminacy.

Thus, quite apart from the significance for practitioners of Afro-Cuban religion of the embarrassing moment occasioned by a "fake deity" soliciting "real money" from a "recognizable stranger" (all three concepts representing ad hoc social constructions), the events that evening in the winter of 1994 were diagnostic of a far more pervasive issue. For Cabrera's phrase "when the truth is lacking one conforms to the lie" (*a falta de pan, casabe*) has lost much of its referents in contemporary Cuba. In the mid-1990s there was no bread without cassava outside of the dollar stores and tourist restaurants. The mealy, cardboard-like taste of the latter pervaded all baked goods distributed to the national population or sold for national currency through legal channels. Nevertheless, *bocadillos* (little rolls) with jam, soy cheese, or slices of *jamónada* (a soy and bone-meal-based substitute for ham) are major incentives for social performance, never failing to appear in the context of mass rallies (*concentraciones*) along with sickly sweet artificially flavored lemonade. Neither do people fail to turn out for mass rallies, participation in which invariably promises a *bocadillo* or two, and a few hours of spectacular diversion from the humdrum of day-to-day chaos and frustrations. In contemporary *concentraciones*, the spectacular always threatens to subsume the political, reversing the order of cause and effect proclaimed by the state through its media, which never fail to celebrate the numerical turnout at mass rallies as evidence of the people's unwavering loyalty to the socialist cause. Contrary to such proclamations, however, it is not so much that political consciousness produces the event, but rather that the event visualizes an imputed relation between popular consciousness and mass agency. Again, simulation would seem to pose a distinct threat.

Žižek's analysis of the reificatory functions of imputed subjectivities once more seems to capture the ambiguities of the kinds of ritual of collective *passio* the Cuban state periodically stages to overwhelm the population with the experience of its existence. As Aguirre (1984:563) notes with obvious disdain, since "the structures of social domination make it profitable for people to conform to the expectations of the state," the "hope of the revolutionary movement is that these practices of social manipulation will eventually create a new socialist man."³⁷ In fact, however, what comes off

37. Aguirre's formulation, of course, betrays a theoretical allegiance to the kind of economic and fundamentally amoral zero-sum conception of a market in human action known as exchange theory.

in Aguirre's account as the state's organizing of its own theater of fantastic self-deception was (and, perhaps, still is) crucial to a time-hallowed problem in Marxist-Leninist thought about the dialectics of praxis and consciousness in the transition to socialism. In line with Che Guevara's (1968:342) definition of voluntary work as *both* the "genuine expression of the communist attitude towards work in a society where the fundamental means of production belong to the society" *and* "a creative school of consciousness" at one and the same time, the Cuban state has long seemed to build its legitimacy on its capacity to excite forms of collective *apasionamiento* (a state of being impassioned) for the Revolution and the principles it stands for. The supposition of such *apasionamiento*, in fact, is a premise without which the theory of moral (as opposed to material) incentives, as critics of the Cuban model of socialism have long pointed out,³⁸ degenerates into a justification for "extracting unpaid labor from workers who feel psychologically coerced to give up their leisure time" (Harris 1992:90). Though rarely used by the state and its media, the transitive Spanish verb *apasionar* (to excite passion in somebody) is particularly apt to convey the manner in which a Revolutionary pedagogy intends to possess individual consciousness through moving people's bodies and making them spectators and analysts of their own collective surges at one and the same time.

Indeed, the histrionics of *concentraciones* are stunning. "*Aquí todos nos volvemos fidelistas* (here we all turn into supporters of Fidel)," a sceptical acquaintance of mine said to me as we were watching the beginning of a two-mile torch-light evening procession commemorating José Martí's birthday from the Parque Central to the quarries, in which Martí was once sentenced to labor, near the end of calle San Lázaro. Having spent most of the afternoon and early evening observing the arrival of lorry after lorry conveying Cuban citizens to prearranged positions on the site, watching them line up, unfold transparencies, produce drums, and form strangely stationary conga lines, I was about to call it a day when flashlights suddenly illuminated an area some 200 yards away from my position at the foot of a tribune. Fidel had appeared as if from nowhere. As I had been told before, nobody knows how he performs his surprise appearances in the midst of densely packed crowds.³⁹ The

38. The major texts of the debate about this issue in the 1960s are conveniently assembled in Silverman (1971). For a more recent and unusually careful assessment see Eckstein (1994).

39. At the very least, the Western skeptic wonders about security measures. Was he there all along, chatting with participants until the crucial moment? Did he crawl out of a manhole? Or did he simply materialize in the midst of a laboriously crafted physical representation of the nation whose *máximo líder* he is? As in the case of spirit possession in Afro-Cuban religions, these questions point toward critical, and, perhaps necessary, ambiguities.

effect was that of a socialist hierophany. Obviously having given the signal *vámonos*, let's go, the sudden apparition and matter-of-fact elocution of *el comandante* literally set several hundreds of thousands of people in motion. Singing, drumming, waving transparencies with appropriate slogans, munching *bocadillos*, and downing lemonade, the masses rendered their spontaneous support, manifesting, in their collective action precisely the kind of overdetermination, excess, and subsumption of the signified under its sign by which Cuban masses seduce (in Baudrillard's [1990] sense) their rulers into being "possessed by a moral force" greater than their own, and of which they are not just "only the interpreter" (Durkheim 1995:212), but, quite simply, also the *only* interpreter.⁴⁰ Seized, and propelled forward by such forces, *el comandante* no longer performs as "a mere individual who speaks but as a group incarnated and personified" (Durkheim 1995:212). The circle closes.

I do not wish to speculate here on the extent of popular Cuban commitment to the present government and its political practices. Most of the people I got to know in Cuba evidenced a precarious balance between disaffection with, and support for, the Revolution, and it would be presumptuous to generalize from my impressions in this respect,⁴¹ as presumptuous, in fact, as to question the reality of my informants' belief in the existence of the *oricha* and the spirits of the dead. In itself, the cultural form action takes gives no

40. Compare Ché Guevara's (1967:10) remarks about the phenomenon: "Fidel is a master at this, whose particular mode of integration with the people can only be appreciated by seeing him in action. In the large public *concentraciones* one observes something like the dialogue of two tuning forks whose vibrations provoke new ones in the interlocutor. Fidel and the masses begin to vibrate in a dialogue of growing intensity until it reaches an abrupt finale crowned by our cries of battle and victory."

41. Most survey research on the matter (including surveys conducted by the government) is ridiculously flawed not just on account of the crudeness of public opinion research in general, or the perennial problem of reliability in the face of politically charged questions. More fundamentally, such studies labor under what one might call the "problem of the happy worker" which Domínguez (1978:473-74) illustrates as follows: "a worker may be observed to be laboring happily. It is possible to conclude that the worker is happy because he has always been so; that the worker is merely pretending to be happy in order to stay out of trouble; that the worker has been "modernized" (this is especially likely in the case of women who have joined the paid labor force); ... that he is happy because he is cooperatively and selflessly working for the common good. Simply by looking at the worker, it is not possible to determine which of these explanations, if any, is correct."

The inference of interest or motivation from action (including acts of verbal expression) – the common chore of anthropologists and historians – crucially involves what Bourdieu (1977:2) calls the "inclination" on the part of the observer "to introduce into the object [of observation] the principles of his relation to the object." On the operation of this moment in contemporary Cubanology (seen as a subfield of Western communist studies) compare the preface to Eckstein (1994), and Burawoy & Lukács (1992) on the epistemological ailments of the study of socialism in general.

clue to motivation or the content of consciousness, which is why, on a more general level, conceptions of belief, attitudes, needs, or ideological commitment as lodged in individual minds are methodologically dubious (Needham 1972). My aim here is not to add to a bulky literature puzzling over the relative nonoccurrence of organized civil disobedience or overt political violence in Cuba in naive psychologistic terms (Do they really identify with socialism? Have they irrevocably fallen for Fidel's charisma? Are surveillance and repression that systematic? Is it a case of mass brainwashing?). I merely want to highlight some of the practical mechanisms by which both Afro-Cuban deities *and* the Cuban state perform themselves into existence. As Philip Abrams (1988:81-82) argued in a devastating critique of the reifications bandied about by political sociologists, the problem is a far more general one. "The state," he posited,

is at most a message of domination – an ideological artefact attributing unity, morality and independence to the disunited, amoral and dependent workings of the practice of government. In this context the message is decidedly *not* the medium – let alone the key to an understanding of the sources of its production, or even of its own real meanings. The message – the claimed reality of the state – is the ideological device in terms of which the political institutionalization of power is legitimated.

Hence the embarrassment, nicely excavated by Taussig (1991), of Durkheim's sacralization of the social as "not wholly external" to the individual, but as a force, exacting and empowering at one and the same time, which "can exist only in and by means of individual minds" and must therefore "enter into us, and become organized within us" (Durkheim 1995:211) in order to enact "powers and qualities as mysterious and baffling as any assigned to the gods by the religions of this world" (Morris Ginsberg cited in Lukes 1973:34-35).

Another circle closes here: "the state is not the reality which stands behind the mask of political practice," Abrams (1988:81-82) tells us. "It is itself the mask which prevents us from seeing political practice as it is." It thrives on systematic misrecognition. Yet just like money or possessing spirits, the state has "reality effects" that are experientially irrepressible – even in the face of subjective disbelief. To use Thoden van Velzen's (1995) terminology, one need not subscribe to the "collective fantasies" of others to be swept along, harmed, or killed, by their power once it incarnates in social action. Moreover, as Fields (1982) has compellingly argued, socially effective definitions of reality and irreality do not necessarily revolve around shared forms of consciousness. Above all, it is the extent to which "moral artefacts" such as money, witchcraft, the state, or the gods come to structure social praxis that endows them with their capacity to affect people's lives,

and so, for all practical purposes to become real. "It is the human predicament," she says

to be "captured" physically by ordinary ways of doing what we ordinarily do, and mentally, by a corresponding idiom of thought. We at once create and are captive of a real world whose order is delimited by the moral artefacts of quotidian activity. (Fields 1982:591)

This, then, may be the predicament at the root of nonexistent prostitution in the face of furious hustling, racism in the absence of race, or dollarizing spirit possession in a socialist country with a supply-side economy, and caught up in a war that does not exist, but causes real casualties: just like Cuban money fails to elicit predictable social effects, Cuban reality fails to "capture" its denizens to a degree where they appear to blindly stumble through a dream-like maze of fantasies always threatening to dissolve into something else.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary Havana, where the vast majority of the population undergoes experiences of deprivation, the capacity of the gods themselves to reciprocate seems increasingly questionable. In many ways, they have turned into a ragged royalty, haggling with their subjects over issues of food and consuming a good deal of their livelihood in the form of ritual dues. In this they uncannily resemble the Cuban state whose erratic economic policies are not just experienced as entirely unpredictable, but as imposing unbearable privations on those of its citizens who still participate in the formally socialist sector of its economy. Depending on the black market exchange rate, formal peso salaries have come to translate into miserable pittance on the "real existing market." In the process those who do the right thing and continue to fulfill what the state defines as civic duties invariably get wronged.

What lies beyond the realm of the moral economies of exchange and consumption characterizing the remnants of the Cuban socialist state and the relationships between gods and devotees in the Yoruba-derived traditions, however, is the moral no-man's land in which forms of sociality epitomized by the *jinetera* and the *bisnero* thrive. Here, *interés* and *interés* alone, structures social relations, in all of its manifestations: from stealing food off government trucks parked in an alleyway for too long, to hiding money, food, and booze from family members, to engaging in commercialized sex, and robbing tourists. It is a world where appearances increasingly become deceptive. In the religious sense, this is not just a matter of faking possession in order to exploit the occasional dollar-heavy foreigner who stumbles into a ceremony. Rather, once religious interpretations are extended to the realm of everyday social relations, the most fitting conceptual frame in which to cast

the ever-present potential for moral derailment appears to be that of witchcraft or, to put the matter in terms closer to popular discourse: the mercenary relationships between *tata ngangas*, and their coerced spiritual labor force; relationships which need not, but always can, result in antisocial projects characterized by predatory escalations of *interés*.

To just give one more example, interpretations foregrounding a moment of establishing control over somebody else's volition are not just part of the *jineterismo* complex, but appear in the context of several new forms of commercialized social interchange. Nowhere is this more obvious than in respect to the new forms of state-licensed private vending of food and beverages. Street talk mostly focuses on images of pollution – dirty hands preparing such foods, tainted products or disgusting materials going into its preparation. At times, however, such rationalizations form a mere screen for fantasies of being victimized by the ingestion of magically charged substances, of incurring the danger of loss of control over one's self by engaging in fundamentally alienated exchanges. Coffee sold across the street to utter strangers is, thus, not only widely perceived as laced with potentially unhealthy substitutes. People have been known to lose control over their volition or consciousness on account of "bad" substances mixed into such beverages or food.

Surely, this could be read as a variation on a classic anthropological theme: the ambivalence exhibited by denizens of incompletely commoditized worlds toward incorporating materials originating from within other people's domestic spheres, and consumed on a "contractual basis," as it were, rather than as an act affirming moral ties. But there is more to it in the case at hand, for commensality always holds its dangers. Cuban folklore provides a rich storehouse for notions of magical acts perpetrated by mixing common beverages such as coffee (the offer of a cup of coffee being regarded as a minimal sign of hospitality) with e.g., menstrual fluids, pubic hair, graveyard dust, etc. These are, albeit in different ways, substances, the ingestion of which produces forms of intimacy – in the literal form of the symbolic interpenetration of otherwise morally unrelated bodies – which can have dangerous consequences because they are socially "unregulated." Hence the power of what Cubans tend to call *polvos*, powderized substances which, once introduced into one's body turn into what Douglas (1969) calls "matter out of place" and pervert the domain they enter into. And in that sense, the secret havoc wrought by *polvos* is not some kind of folk rationalization of the onslaught of capital developed by "neophyte proletarians" as Taussig (1980) might have it, for it is hard, indeed, to think of any place in the Caribbean after the onset of slave-based plantation agriculture as pre-capitalist (or even only noncapitalist). Rather, such suspicions crystallize a theory of human violation and abuse which articulates with, rather than being produced in response to, a dollarizing economy, where different currencies begin to speak not just to unequal life-chances, but to stark contrasts

between notions of agency and powerlessness, identity, selfhood, and otherness mediated by ultimately fluid and shifting moral economies tied to different monetary media of exchange.

"*Eso no camina aqui*" (this does not go/take you anywhere here), said a private taxi driver to a friend of mine still working a state job when he offered him a standard peso fare for a ride he shared with me in 1995. Like the deity in the anecdote recounted earlier, the driver felt it was not the currency appropriate to the situation. Thinking that I did not speak Spanish, he told my friend what a fool he was not to let me pay, and berated him for his lack of solidarity in depriving a fellow Cuban of the spoils of association with a dollar-laden foreigner. To both of their embarrassment, I set the situation straight, and paid up in dollars, sick as I was of the painful complications such situations usually bring forth. As if to purposively make the situation even more painful for us, the man then gratuitously explained that he would have taken us anyway, since he, too, was heading for the privatized market on *calle Egido*, to buy – and this is what he literally said – US\$ 200 worth of pork to put in his freezer. You never know when the government will shut down these markets again. My friend's monthly peso earnings at the time translated into some US\$ 4 at the current black market exchange rate. I don't think he had seen anything but an occasional piece of one of Cuba's various, but all highly unappetizing, meat-substitutes on his plate for months.

In Cuba, today, the dollar walks and talks. When I go there, it is as if I take on its greenish hue. I eat cassava-laced bread, bony little frozen fish, rice, and, when possible, beans and a slice of bone-meal-heavy *jamonada*. But I bring cooking oil to the household I am a guest in, and maybe soap, tampons, candy, razorblades, and ball-point pens I bought in bulk in Europe or North America, or a bottle of rum, which I intend to consume with my friends and can easily afford. And on my person I carry the unfathomable riches which buy me a trip back from the island to lands where everyone earns incomes in convertible currency, a stunning idea for people caught up in a disintegrating version of Soviet-style state capitalism riddled with a dual currency system that brings out the worst in two worlds.

In fact, I am such wealth as lines my pocket. Neighbors of people I regularly visit hang out on their doorsteps watching me pass by, and they are undoubtedly discussing in what hideous ways my friends and acquaintances might be compromising their personal integrity to make the foreigner come back to their house several times a week. They are not entirely off the mark. In hotels and rented apartments in Havana, people like me literally consume Cuban bodies. And the magic wand we all use is as frightening in its social power and moral implications as the practices of *tata ngangas* who send the captured spirits of dead people on nightly errands of vengeance and destruction. Indeed, I can think of few better analyses of what Marx called the fetishism of commodities and the secret thereof than the ways in which

practitioners of Afro-Cuban religion have come to interpret the increasing perversion of Cuban social reality by the fantasm of *el fula*, the indomitable bill of exchange, liquidizer of social forms and identities, *fascinans* and *tremendum* at one and the same time, which, for better or for worse, irrevocably ties their country to the capitalist world system.

POSTSCRIPT: NOVEMBER 2004

On October 27, 2004, the president of Cuba's National Bank, Francisco Soberón Valdés, proclaimed what likely will be the most far-reaching monetary reforms since the original legalization of the U.S. dollar as a parallel currency in 1993.⁴² Citing the recent intensification of U.S. embargo policies designed to severely restrict dollar remittances, as well as commercial currency flows, to the island as an unprecedented threat demanding immediate response, the Cuban government decreed that U.S. currency will cease to circulate after November 8, 2004. While possession of U.S. dollars will remain legal, their function as a universal medium of exchange is projected to end on November 14, after which dollars will have to be exchanged for *pesos convertibles*, officially pegged at a one-to-one level, but obtainable only at a 10 percent surcharge. Coming as it does in response to *both* U.S. economic aggression *and* a mounting energy crisis caused by the failure of one of the island's major power plants in the summer of 2004 and the vertiginous increase of the global price of oil, this move to suspend the dollar and replace it with the *peso convertible* likely aims less to restore Cuba's "monetary sovereignty" (as official sources announced to Western news agencies) by ultimately fictive means, than to force its citizens to relinquish their hold on hoarded hard currency (estimated in the millions of U.S. dollars), and to make them resign themselves to the exclusive use of the *peso convertible*, a phantom currency, the capacity of which to underwrite routine fetishizations of value had always been regarded as dubious by most Cubans I came to know. Whether social practices involving the *peso convertible* will come to circumscribe a stable or even only socially coherent fiction of value is impossible to tell at this point. Yet the fact that Cuban banking institutions registered 700,000 transactions involving last-minute dollar exchanges within a single week⁴³ might well be taken to indicate that *el fula* will continue to exert its magic – and will do so not only as an external determinant of the economic viability of the Revolutionary Cuban state, but also as a powerfully charged referent within the precarious economy of signs structuring social life in post-cold war Havana.

42. Banco Nacional de Cuba, 2004. Resolución 80/2004 in *Juventud Rebelde*.

43. Anita Snow, 2004, Cuba Looks to Save Peso from Devaluation, on www.newsday.com (accessed November 5, 2004).

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ALEX VAN STIPRIAAN

JULY 1, EMANCIPATION DAY IN SURINAME: A CONTESTED
LIEU DE MÉMOIRE, 1863-2003

Many a historian, since the late 1980s and early 1990s and particularly in the United States and Western Europe, has delighted in pinpointing, describing, and analyzing national *lieux de mémoire* (realms of memory).¹ These historians have concentrated on a wide variety of historical icons in nation-states. However, the nation-state does not necessarily have a monopoly on *lieux de mémoire*. Any group or community may have their *lieux de mémoire* as icons of a shared history. Diasporas are good examples: on the one hand, they are globalized communities with a common history and a common homeland or conception of the homeland that may exceed the nation-state. On the other hand, diaspora communities are rooted and located in particular nation-states or state-like constructs, like colonies, within which they often find themselves in a minority, and often subaltern, position.² Therefore, diaspora *lieux de mémoire* may be part of a nation-state's memories, but it is just as possible that they belong to shared identities or ideologies that undermine, and even exceed, the nation-state. As a consequence, *lieux de mémoire* may be heavily contested areas of history.

At the same time, those in power – those who decide what is good or useful for the nation to remember, and what is not – initiate, or at least censor, *lieux de mémoire*. Most *lieux de mémoire* are thus introduced from the top down, and are therefore also *lieux d'amnésie* (realms of amnesia or forget-

1. See Kammen 1991, Den Boer & Frijhoff 1993, Van Sas 1995, Nora 1996-98. *Lieux de mémoire* are tangible or intangible historical "sites" (memory places) that actually or allegedly constitute a nation's identity. "Memory as Nora conceives of it does not constitute a monolithic entity. Beyond the repertoire of monuments, institutions, events, and commemorative dates, *Realms of Memory* also evokes the conflictual spaces and symbolic divisions within [for Nora] France that reconfigure its relationship with the past" (L.D. Kritzman in Nora 1996:x).

2. See Safran 1991, Cohen 1997, Butler 2001, Manning 2003.

ting). For example, the U.S. government was responsible for the erection of Civil War monuments, though according to John Gillis (1994:10) they

were the icons of whites only. Post-Civil War American identity was forged by forgetting the contributions of African Americans to the military effort, forgetting even what the struggle had been about. Faced with oblivion of the quintessential "other," ex-slaves invented their own commemoration of the Emancipation Proclamation, known to them (and largely only to them) as "Juneteenth."

This *lieu de mémoire* may do double duty as a *lieu d'amnésie*, but that role is not always accepted by those who are forgotten, the "people without a history" (see Wolf 1982), and for that reason, a realm of memory is also a realm of contest that is transformed "from below." These transformations may mirror societal changes (see Trouillot 1995, Price 1998).³

I focus on what is probably the most important *lieu de mémoire* of the African diaspora, apart from Africa itself: the abolition of New World slavery and its commemoration since that time in the former Dutch slave-plantation colony, Suriname. Has the commemoration of July 1, 1863 been used as a realm of memory – to forget – and how and why? How has this realm of memory been contested, and has it been influenced by being, or feeling, part of a diaspora?

EMANCIPATION AND THE CHURCH

Long before the twenty-one salute shots announcing the end of slavery were fired at 6 a.m. on July 1, 1863, the colonial government in Suriname had begun replacing its policy of controlling the enslaved by a combination of force and segregation with a policy of mental control and discipline. Until the late 1820s, the enslaved had legally been no more than property, and they were therefore forbidden to learn to read or write, among other things, nor could they generally become Christians. This began to change because of interference by Governor General Van den Bosch, who was sent to the Dutch West Indies to investigate the poor economy there and propose plans for recovery in the radically changing circumstances of the time. The importation

3. Often, according to Trouillot (1995:4-31), historians produced narratives approved by those in power, academically or politically, causing a silencing of other or counter-narratives. Historians have largely ignored the alternatives, even though "any historical narrative is a particular bundle of silences, the result of a unique process, and the operation required to deconstruct these silences will vary accordingly" (Trouillot 1995:27).

of Africans had formally ended during the British occupation of Suriname in 1808, but until Van den Bosch's mission, tens of thousands of Africans were brought into the colony illegally. Illegal importation gradually ceased, with the support of the British, who were on the verge of abolishing slavery in the Empire, including Suriname's neighboring colony British Guiana,⁴ altogether. Van den Bosch's reports resulted in a series of socioeconomic and political changes, but the enslaved were probably most affected by his recommendation to begin converting them to Christianity. He even recommended which missionary society seemed to be best suited to this purpose, reporting that

in the general interest, the doctrines of the Moravian Brethren seem to offer most advantages because they predispose the mind to patient resignation and contentment with the present destiny, and inspire aversion to changing this by force.⁵

Thenceforth Moravian missionaries were encouraged to start missionizing among the enslaved in the plantation areas, and after initial obstruction by many of the planters, they were able to carry out their missionary activities. Consequently, by 1863, the majority of the enslaved had been converted at least nominally, most by the Moravians and a minority by Roman Catholic missionaries.

Neither the Moravian nor Catholic churches had ever taken any action to put an end to slavery in Suriname. On the contrary, the churches were often used by the plantocracy as agents for their own interests (Lamur 1985:44-49). However, they did care about the fate of the enslaved and often tried to improve their conditions. Furthermore, as part of their missionary activities, they learned the creole language of the enslaved and translated the Bible, other religious books, and songbooks into it.

These missionary activities were not new to the Moravians. They had shown a keen interest in missionizing among the Saramaka Maroons in the interior of Suriname since the eighteenth century. They had been playing a liaison role for the colonial government ever since and kept an eye on everything that might disturb the colonial status quo. As a result, there were no other whites or free persons that the enslaved had more contact with and trusted, to a certain extent. And at the same time the authorities were in a position to know that the enslaved would not become a threat to the colonial status quo. Thus the Church, particularly the Moravian Church, was the ideal partner for the colonial authorities to realize a smooth transition to freedom.

4. British Guiana was then still known as Demerara and Berbice. These had been Dutch colonies, but they were occupied by the British in 1796 and officially handed over to them in 1816.

5. National Archives, The Hague (henceforth NA), Collection Van den Bosch, p. 108. Translations of this and other originally Dutch texts were done by Nel Bakker.

As early as 1847, it was obvious to one of the very few critical Moravian missionaries that they were used "to keep the negroes in subordination and under control as if there was a presentiment that at one time the means of the whip would be considered insufficient" (quoted in Lamur 1985:44).

At least six years before actual emancipation, the governor of Suriname consulted the president of the Moravian Brethren in Suriname on the question of how the transition to freedom should be made. President Van Calker's answer was that emancipation should be introduced gradually, because as a consequence of their low level of civilization the enslaved would not be able to handle sudden freedom (Lenders 1996:227). The Moravian Brethren were then given increased responsibility for helping to realize this smooth transition to freedom. According to an eyewitness in the official Colonial Report of 1863, the behavior of the emancipated proved that "the labor of the Moravian Brethren here has worked favorably for many years."⁶

The pride the Moravians took in this work was clearly demonstrated by the way their president, Van Calker, described how, on the day of emancipation, immediately after the official church service in the main church in Paramaribo, an old Afro-Surinamese rose and "thanked us on behalf of everyone for all the education from the Word of God and all the efforts we had made for them, and then he continued: 'thou art our fathers and we are thy children; we beg of thee to go on admonishing us, governing us and educating us.'"⁷ This was exactly the sort of response colonial and church officials had hoped for, of course. But that does not mean there were no conflicts or that all former slaves behaved as they were supposed to in the eyes of the Moravian Church – far from it. There is enough evidence showing that the abolition of slavery was celebrated not only in church but also in *winti* ceremonies attended by people who, in spite of the missionaries' warnings and anger, participated in both (Bartelink 1914:60; Klinkers 1997:112-13). There were greater and smaller conflicts, with the missionaries as mediators, over the contracts that former slaves were obliged to enter into with plantation owners for the ten-year period of so-called state supervision after emancipation. Moreover, gender relations between former slaves differed greatly from the idea missionaries had about how Christians should conduct these (see Lamur 1985; Lenders 1996:243-53; Klinkers 1997:106-83). Nevertheless, the Moravian Brethren⁸ were the guardians of a morality that was perfectly in line with postslavery colonial interests, and their articulation of Emancipation Day underlined their position.

Patience, obedience, modesty, and, above all, gratitude, were key words in Moravian theology, and consequently, in their approach to emancipation.

6. *Koloniaal Verslag Suriname*, 1863.

7. Letter by Van Calker dated July 4, 1863 in *Berigten uit de Heidenwereld* 7, supplement, pp. 2-15.

8. The Moravians were later called the Evangelical Brethren Community.

The cult of gratitude and modesty – and more generally, morality – was thus constructed on the grounds of Moravian ideology, and it has been reproduced and renewed in every emancipation celebration since. Until at least the second half of the twentieth century, the Moravians stressed that the formerly enslaved owed gratitude to the Europeans for being led out of slavery; modesty was required because physical emancipation was not the same as emancipation from moral or mental slavery, which was said to be a long way away, particularly for Afro-Surinamese. The chief Biblical text to which references have been made on Emancipation Day almost every year since 1863 is John 8:36: “if the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” This text was used during slavery to tell the enslaved that they should not strive for physical freedom, but that they should strive for freedom of the soul. In 1863 it was used to keep the emancipated from rioting and to fit them smoothly into the apprenticeship system of state supervision. Since then it has also been part of colonial assimilation policy: only decent Christians can be free. Theologian and historian J.M. van der Linde (1953:14) therefore defined this text as “programmatic.”

Some examples of the use of this text follow. On the fiftieth anniversary of emancipation in 1913, the well-known Surinamese composer Helstone, together with the poet Marcus, composed a hymn that was published and has often been performed (quoted in Van der Linde 1953:32). It paraphrased the text of John 36:

No more slaves, yes no more slavery.
 The chains of slav'ry are unbound.
 King's mighty word has made us free
 And given light to all around.
 But [he] who was made free by the Son,
 Is truly free, is truly free from guilt and sin.
 All broken are their ties anon
 And happiness from him they win.

In the *Emancipatie Courant* of January 1, 1928 no mention is made of this text, but its echoes can unmistakably be heard in the answers of readers who have been asked whether they have done their duty in the previous year, or if they have remained “slave[s] of passions and desires ... a slave, despite the twenty-one gunshots of 1863 which broke your slave chains.”

During the celebration of the emancipation centenary in 1963, many references were made to the text from John, and one columnist of the daily *De West*⁹ even explicitly referred to Van Calker's sermon of one century before, while adding that real freedom was much more than just social emancipation and could only be found in following God. Thirty years later, in the other

9. June 29, 1963.

Surinamese daily, *De Ware Tijd*,¹⁰ it was suggested that besides *keti koti*, one of the names for Emancipation Day, meaning “the chains have been broken,” another name be added, *koti keti*, which means, more or less, “break the chains,” because there was still so much wage slavery and mental slavery to be liberated from. Although in this the paternalistic tone has not changed much, the fundamental difference with previous texts is that it does not support the status quo but seems to be an appeal to fight it. Yet it was not the first time that Emancipation Day was claimed as a means or symbol of opposition against the status quo. It was just one of the outcomes of a process that had started at the beginning of the twentieth century but that had been restrained for a long time by colonial repression.

A CULT OF GRATITUDE

What role did the Church¹¹ play in the creation of a colonial version of history that has long clung to Emancipation Day? Encouraged by the government, the Church has more or less dominated Emancipation Day and its yearly celebrations since 1863. The cult of gratitude that surrounded these celebrations had two characteristics, both of which were instrumental to the creation of a new narrative of emancipation, that is, to covering up the atrocities of slavery. First, the Church had always diminished the importance of physical freedom and promoted the pursuit of mental freedom by being a good Christian. The pursuit of this superior form of freedom was always presented as being achievable by following a long and arduous path, not only because it was said to be more difficult to reach something superior, but also because those that had to follow the path were considered so inferior. Turning heathenish – primitive – Africans into decent – European-like – Christians took much time and effort. However, this notion of racial inequality was also a way of denying slavery: inequality was presented as the natural state of things. This natural state could only be overcome under Christian leadership, and according to this reasoning, it followed that white guidance was beneficial for Africans. At the same time, the emphasis on trying to achieve Christian superiority was a denial of the centuries-long role Christianity had played in legitimizing the Dutch slave trade and slavery. That slaves in Suriname had been denied membership of Christian churches for the greater part of slavery was disregarded.

The second characteristic of the Moravian-led Emancipation cult was the ritualization of gratitude. The emancipated were pressed to be grateful to

10. June 26, 1993.

11. Here I refer to both the Roman Catholic and Moravian churches, though primarily to the Moravians because the Roman Catholic Church began its missionary activities among the enslaved only shortly before emancipation, and was therefore much smaller. Their approaches differed very little, however.

God and the Church for leading them out of slavery. They were to ask His help for real emancipation, that is, of the soul. But that was not all. The cult of gratitude was a means of denying the atrocities of slavery, as on June 30, 1863, when everywhere in the country, church services were being held to clean the soul by asking forgiveness for all sins committed during slavery.¹² On the contrary, no such thing was expected of the slave masters. One Moravian missionary described in a letter that "on all plantations in my district the Negroes, after the day of their Release, applied to their masters, as I had impressed strongly upon them, to ask their [master's] forgiveness for everything they had been guilty of previously, and at the same time to express their thanks."¹³

The inversion of roles only happened on that occasion, and never recurred. On the other hand, the governor obtained a permanent role in the cult of gratitude. Immediately after the official church service on July 1, 1863 in the main Moravian church, the so-called Mama Kerki, everyone present in, and many more outside, the church marched in a procession to the square in front of the governor's palace. The governor congratulated the emancipated on "the great gift given to them by the king," and continued to speak, "as a father would speak to his children ... that they should be hard-working, orderly, obedient, and grateful to the government." The crowd then covered him with flowers and sang songs of gratitude to him, whereafter, according to eyewitnesses, he "could not hold back his tears of joy and satisfaction."¹⁴

Governor Van Lansberge and Attorney General Gefken had always been in favor of abolition. Gefken had even been an official member of the Abolitionist Society, so expressions of gratitude to him were not out of place. Van Lansberge's successors, however, had played no role whatsoever in the abolition of slavery, but until well after World War II, they were presented with an aubade of songs of gratitude and praise every July 1. By that time these expressions of gratitude, often led by church officials, were not addressed to the governors personally, but to the person he represented: the king, later the queen, of Holland. Particularly King William III, who had signed the Abolition Act, became an icon in the commemoration of abolition in Suriname, which was attributed to him personally. However, because there is no indication that he had done any more than sign one of innumerable laws,¹⁵ it is evident that his figure was used to appease any feelings of hatred toward those who had

12. Letter by Van Calker dated July 4, 1863, in *Berigten* 7, pp. 2-15.

13. Letter by Moravian missionary Jansa dated July 31, 1863, in *Berigten* 7, p. 214.

14. Zeegelaar 1871:65-66; letter by Van Calker, July 4, 1863, in *Berigten* 7, Bijblad, pp. 2-15.

15. In Tamse's (1979:307-57) analysis of William III's reign, for example, the abolition of slavery is not even mentioned.

been responsible for the longevity of the slave system and its atrocities in the first place. William III came to be represented as the person who, practically on his own, had liberated the Afro-Surinamese people from slavery, and the Church actively promoted this representation. The metaphor of Moses leading his people out of Egyptian slavery was often evoked.¹⁶

William III's immense popularity among the Afro-Surinamese probably originated in October 1862, when final abolition on July 1 of the next year was announced to the enslaved population. This proclamation, which was written in Dutch as well as in Sranan and often read aloud to them by missionaries, gave the impression that the king was addressing the enslaved directly and personally:

It has pleased the King to decide on the day on which slavery will be abolished forever in the colony of Suriname. On July 1 you will be free! But the King, longing to see everyone under his paternal authority living happily, has wanted to announce to you these happy tidings now, so that you may await this moment you have wished for so much in joy and contentedness.¹⁷

Soon afterwards Moravian missionaries started rehearsing with the enslaved a song that was composed by the president of the Moravians, Van Calker, and missionary Rau, to the tune of a Dutch patriotic song.¹⁸ It would come to be known as the King's Song:

The King's name be esteemed!
Thanks be to the King!
Come, let us sing his praise
In loud voices!
He made us, poor Negroes, free
From shame and slavery!
God bless King William the Third
For such a mark of goodwill!

16. One minister stated at the fiftieth anniversary of emancipation that "William III, like a second Moses unshackled the iron chains which kept fettered the Surinamese slave, and true to his principles and the traditions of his glorious and illustrious ancestors spoke the authoritative words: 'I want the abolition of slavery in all regions under my Crown'" (*Gedenkboek* 1913:17; see also Rier 1904:37).

17. *Surinaamsche Courant*, October 3, 1862.

18. This song has long been a sort of Dutch national anthem, and it was always referred to by its first phrase: "To those who have Dutch blood running through their veins, free from foreign stains" (*Wien Neerlands bloed door d'adren vloeit, van vreemde smetten vrij*).

He himself wishes to be our Father,
 Opens up his heart to us!
 We are his children, great and small,
 He shared our sorrow
 May his praise resound more and more
 He gives us our freedom back!
 God bless King William the Third
 For such a mark of goodwill!

During the three-day celebration in 1863, this seven-stanza song was sung, often three times or more, at every church service, to every senior colonial official, and at every more or less formal gathering. Since its inception it was sung at every July 1 celebration until well after World War II. A whole body of so-called King's Songs even came into being, including an endless series of poems praising the Dutch monarchy (the House of Orange), the production of which ceased only after independence in 1975 (Van Kempen 2002, III: 222-23).

As time passed, King William's role as the undisputed advocate of the enslaved and the "Moses of the House of Orange" reached mythical proportions, culminating at the 1913 Emancipation Golden Jubilee. An "Emancipation committee" of dedicated citizens had spent a long time raising money for a carved image of the late King William, made in the Netherlands, which they offered to the colonial government. The colonial authorities placed it in front of the "tower building," which overlooked Government Square and housed the colony's Financial Administration. Praise was lavished on William, cockades with his image were sold in the streets, and the "national composer" Helstone composed several Jubilee songs in which William figured prominently. One of these songs showed that after William's death in 1890, his position as the patron saint of the Afro-Surinamese was passed on seamlessly to his daughter Wilhelmina:

Io vivat, Io vivat,
 Hail to our Queen!
 We celebrate in good spirits
 The memorable fiftieth anniversary
 Io vivat, Io vivat
 Hail to our Queen!

In the second stanza, the "our Queen" was replaced with "our Princess" (Juliana), then came "the Governor," and finally the Dutch and Surinamese peoples (Marcus & Helstone 1913). Whether the singers actually knew what *Io vivat* meant is doubtful, given that oral tradition turned it into *Fio fifat* (see De Drie 1984:103). William's "sanctification" and that, subsequently, of his royal successors took root firmly. Much later, when the role of the Dutch was no longer undisputed in the colony, an observer noted that

even in intellectual circles the liberation of the slaves was bound up with the name of the Monarch of Orange ... Finally I stopped talking about it [liberation and the monarch's role] because I understood that the people of Suriname, convinced of the almost mystical omnipotence of a ruler somewhere in Holland, had a royalist mentality. (Van de Walle 1975:50, 104)

The cult of gratitude had obviously been successfully used to eclipse, for the enslaved and their descendants, their history.

However, the founding of the Golden Jubilee of Emancipation Citizens' Committee attested to the Church's losing the emancipation commemoration as its prerogative. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, the Moravian Brethren had the exclusive rights to Emancipation Day, but in 1904, this began to change, even though the change was inspired by a church minister.

EMANCIPATION DAY BEYOND THE CHURCH

When the ten-year period of state supervision came to an end on July 1, 1873, and slavery was finally truly abolished,¹⁹ the festivities were almost a replica of those in 1863. It was hardly celebrated outside the church, and, in fact, was hardly celebrated at all, in particular in Paramaribo. In a speech in 1904 Rier remarked,

The day of liberty, which is held in such high esteem by peoples elsewhere, was mainly forgotten here. The emancipated and the children of the emancipated hardly cared about it. The emancipation zeal is still largely alive among the common people of the [rural] districts, but in town it is almost dead. (Rier 1904:5)

People in Paramaribo may have found the didacticism of the Moravians little-inspiring or even stifling, or maybe reminding the colonizers too much of the days of slavery was not conducive to a successful colonial career. The different reaction in the rural districts, where church control was looser and where a colonial career hardly counted, seems to confirm this assertion. Furthermore, until King William's death in 1890, it was the king's birthday, not July 1, that was celebrated more exuberantly because it was less provoking or offensive to those who had been responsible for almost two centuries of slavery in Suriname.

Around the turn of the century, when Afro-Surinamese started to emigrate and some of them consciously started to link Afro-Surinamese to the African diaspora, particularly that in the United States, things began to change. In response to the awareness that Asian immigrants were going to stay in

19. In the British Caribbean, the end of apprenticeship system in 1838 is called Full Freedom (see Lumsden 1994; Brereton 1996).

Suriname and were beginning to constitute a substantial part of the population, a need emerged for space to express an autonomous ethnocultural Afro-Surinamese public identity. Both emigration and the presence of Asian immigrants stimulated the diasporic and ethnic dimensions of Afro-Surinamese identity, which was reflected in the new form and substance given to July 1. On the one hand, Emancipation Day became the ultimate opportunity to express Afro-nationalism, and the way in which it was expressed was linked to an international diasporic discourse. On the other hand, the July 1 celebration of being Afro-Surinamese became localized and folklorized to a considerable extent, which mitigated the potential threat to the colonial status quo propagated by July 1. In spite of the continued central position of God and the Dutch royal family in the July 1 discourse and the sustained dominance of a didactic tone, Emancipation Day began to move into the secular world. Religious morality was not replaced but was supplemented with a colonial-civil, as well as an ethno-nationalistic, morality.

JULY 1 AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA

There are hardly any indications that before the twentieth century, Afro-Surinamese felt they were part of a wider history and of more extensive relationships than the Dutch-Surinamese ones. Naturally, there was an awareness of having African roots, but there do not seem to have been any ties, or a longing for them, with the mother continent. Neither do the Afro-Surinamese seem to have turned to other Africans in the diaspora for support and inspiration. The first generation after emancipation was probably too busy surviving and securing a place in colonial society to be concerned with the African diaspora. As financial opportunities increased, so did the opportunity to look beyond the borders, literally and figuratively, as did J.P. Rier, who turned July 1 into a day of black consciousness, without, however, abandoning the cult of gratitude to God and the king.

Rier was born in 1863, just before abolition. His parents were members of the Moravian Brethren. As an adult, he joined the American National Baptist Convention in neighboring British Guiana. According to his later biographer, Abbenhuis, the word "convention" meant

That the community may only be made up of consciously delivered people, who therefore lead a perfect and apostolic life. The third word, "national," has been derived from the Negro churches, autonomous and founded by Negroes in the U.S.A., where in 1886 some Negro groups joined together under that name to resist and curb the growing influence of the Whites in the Baptist community.²⁰

20. M.F. Abbenhuis in *De West*, June 22, 1963.

This National Baptist Convention maintained international contacts, with Georgetown, for one, and later with Paramaribo.

After his return to Suriname in 1890, Rier founded a Free Evangelization community together with two others, and became a minister in his own Free Gospel Hall. He translated the American Sankey songbook into Sranan, but was at the same time "an ardent advocate of Dutch as the vernacular, and the language of education and culture as well, to develop the Negro population socially. The language of his heart, however, continued to be Nengre," according to Abbenhuis in 1963. In 1903 Rier left to continue his studies in the United States, where he qualified as a minister. He must have drawn much inspiration there from the activities of the Baptists, but also from Afro-American pioneers like Booker T. Washington. Upon his second time returning to Suriname, Rier argued fervently that it was a disgrace that Emancipation Day, or the Day of Liberty as he called it, was no longer observed in Suriname, and worse, that people were ashamed of it and that its fortieth anniversary in 1903 had passed unnoticed. He took the initiative to change this apathy for good. Rier said, "he heard the voice of his race, of Ethiopia, as he calls his Negro people."²¹ He persuaded the members of the Suriname Evangelisation Baptist Community to follow this "'prompting of the Lord' with him and he set up a men's committee and a women's committee," the former for organizing and the latter for the embellishment and decoration of the festivity.

The two committees were made up of the rising Afro-Surinamese middle class of civil servants, supervisors, craftsmen, traders, shopkeepers, and their wives. In the days preceding July 1, Rier launched a media offensive of advertisements and articles in which he used phrases like "unity is strength," and he published a poem that included the following stanza:

Hail to you, race too long oppressed!
 You, deeply humiliated and despised!
 Anoint your head and happy face,
 And clothe yourself in festive attire!
 Forget your weals and wounds!
 They have been healed or bound
 By the message of peace sent to you. (Rier 1904:12-13)

Thus, Rier did not place himself outside the religious discourse, though he did not use it to filter out the violent past of slavery. Moreover, he emphasized self-awareness rather than the usual modesty.

On July 1, 1904 a crowd of three to four thousand people gathered in and around the Concordia freemasons' lodge, which he had rented, to listen to his two-and-a-half hour "religious lecture," as he called it, though it was actu-

21. M.F. Abbenhuis in *De West*, June 22, 1963

ally more like an eighteen-point program. During the lecture he consistently addressed his audience with the diaspora term "Ethiopians" and English phrases, and terms like "Afro-Dutch" and "emancipation progress" pointed to the influence on his thought of the African diaspora in the United States. Although he neatly conformed to the rhetoric of gratitude to God and the king, and in so doing seemed more fervent even than the Moravians, tacitly he sketched an altogether different picture of the events surrounding emancipation than the one that had been accepted. According to him, slavery was abolished because God had ordered the governments to do so, because there was a growing realization that the "Ethiopian" was the brother and equal of the European, and because of the "resistance of the slaves against their masters," in which Rier said, the voice of God was probably to be heard as well (1904:35, 44). He also spoke of the "slavish wealth" that Suriname produced and "which the Netherlands was rolling in," and his rhetoric nearly turned socialist when he talked about "the struggle between capital and labor." He also hammered at "the sense of self-esteem, honor, duty and mutual help" of the Afro-Surinamese and put forth a petition, which was strongly reminiscent of similar actions in the United States, making demands for better education and scholarships, protection of labor, and the protection of women (Rier 1904:22-23, 75).

At the same time, he constantly searched his own, "Ethiopian" conscience, but pointed out a culprit too, "it is sad to see the traces of the former slave life, morals and customs – fortunately wiped off many of the emancipated – but still to be found among most, clearly and unaltered" (Rier 1904:49-50). Rier mentions, for example, shamelessness, a lack of a sense of duty and honor, polygamy, polyandry, licentiousness, a lack of mutual trust, the worship of money and not God, the vain worship of folk dancing. According to him, Sunday had become a day of sin and "lesbian love" abounded. He blames it all on the colonial "popular educators" who had not acquitted themselves well of their tasks (Rier 1904:49-51). No member of the Moravian Brethren had ever uttered such sharp criticism, let alone beaten on the drum of black self-awareness.

With Rier's initiative and Emancipation Day a symbol of and forum for Afro-Surinamese identity, for the first time it was partly removed from the Church and linked to a wider diaspora context. The didacticism attached to this day was doubled by this new context, for the Christian morality was supplemented with the diaspora morality of the black race, or the African nations, which had to show the world, and especially itself, what it was capable of. For the first time, too, Emancipation Day was not only seen as a joyful, future-oriented liberation celebration, but just as much as a common expression of the traumatic legacy of slavery, and that was because Emancipation Day was no longer given shape exclusively from above but was also claimed and realized noninstitutionally, by a man who gave a voice

to ordinary Afro-Surinamese and placed the initiative in their hands. The diasporan and black-consciousness dimension of July 1 has not disappeared since Rier, though it was more evident and people were more active in voicing it in certain periods than in others, often because of one or two people.

What did change with time was the awareness and self-awareness of those who gave form and substance to this dimension of July 1. Rier was still largely influenced by the religious tradition surrounding emancipation. If he had broken too abruptly with it, he probably would not have been readily accepted by a wider public, for it had been brought up in this tradition for decades. Even more difficult would have been his acceptance by the colonial authorities, who feared nothing so much as opposition and a change in thought. But because he was a man of the church, albeit a fairly oppositional one, it is quite plausible that Rier diverged from the dominant discourse not as a result of strategic considerations, but because he sincerely did not want to. Incidentally, this sometimes led him to express paradoxical points of view.

On the one hand, the clouded view of the slavery past was brought into focus by the explicit mention of a tradition of resistance, as well as by referring to the legacy of trauma left by the system. When he spoke about the Maroons in the country's interior, Rier (1904:55) left little room for misunderstandings when he stated that "with grim faces, [they] can read the history of the past on each tree leaf in the book of Memory."

On the other hand, Rier (1904:47) produced – re-produced, in fact – an unemancipated sense of history by his constant demonstrations of loyalty to the Dutch monarchy, and King William III in particular. This even led him to use the Bible and the French Revolution in a remarkable mixed metaphor to sound his monarch's praises: "this Moses, resolute and unshakeable as a rock in his decision, bearing the banner of equality in one hand, and that of brotherhood in the other, planted the tree of freedom in Suriname" (Rier 1904:37-38). Moreover, having people repeatedly sing *Wien neerlands bloed door d'adren vloeit, van vreemde smetten vrij* seems to negate historical reality.

Nevertheless, these inconsistencies pale into insignificance when they are compared to Rier's (1904:60) statement about the need for the descendants of slavery "to extend our warm and heartfelt thanks to those who – by God's leave – carried our ancestors from the fallen African regions into slavery in order to teach us with the help of discipline, as best they can, morality, humanity, liberality, activity, fraternity, civility." It seems almost too ironic to be sincere. While the colonial view of the slavery past is broken with, it is at once counteracted with a point of view that had been current among slave owners, especially in the early days of slavery. Essentially Rier's message is not one that calls Afro-Surinamese to be proud of who they *are*, but proud of what they *may achieve* when they shed their African

primitiveness and let themselves be led by European standards of civilization. He probably meant to instill this awareness at the functional and cognitive levels in particular, but wanted the Afro-Surinamese to be proud of their ethnic and cultural identity at the emotional level. Rier's (1904:67) strong advocacy of Dutch as the language for advancement, while at the same time he lovingly translated many eminent, mostly religious texts into Sranan (Van Kempen 2002, III:366), attests to his envisaging a split between the practical benefit of European guidance and Afro-Surinamese cultural pride. Rier took a similar dualistic stance vis-à-vis the diaspora. He invoked the Bible to commemorate the day on which Moses led his people back home out of Egyptian slavery, while on the other hand he called the African diaspora "our blessing and ascent" and made an appeal to love the native soil and regard it as holy (Rier 1904:26, 18).

However contradictory and paradoxical he may be at times, it is clear that since Rier's activities, part of the Afro-Surinamese population established a link with, and drew inspiration from, what was happening elsewhere in the African diaspora in the New World, particularly in the United States. Speeches by teacher and Afro-Surinamese consciousness-raising activist T.A.C. Comvalius clearly reveal that he was familiar with the work of Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Dubois. For example, in the same year that a pan-African conference was held in Paris, Comvalius (1919:11) made mention of it in Suriname (*Gedenkboek* 1913:86). At the Emancipation Golden Jubilee in 1913, even the president of the Moravian Brethren referred to Booker T. Washington and his promoting Afro-American economic initiatives whereby no one could ignore them, and by which they would become independent (Voullaire 1913:81-82). In the 1920s, a church and school were established in Suriname under the auspices of the African Methodist Episcopal Church (AMEC) from the United States, and in 1924 there was even a branch of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA), Marcus Garvey's international mass movement, which called for the return to Africa, set up in Suriname and headed by the Rijts brothers. Yet the return has never become an important issue in Suriname, though it does seem that the process of black awakening was finally set in motion in those days and was freed from its local isolation.²² The July 1 celebration was the one occasion in a year when it was expressed.

22. The following sources bear witness to the newly formed links with other parts of the diaspora: "it seems that some Surinamese worked at the UNIA head office in Harlem, New York, that is, Otto Huiswoud and Florian Faverey" (Verhees 2000:318); "even before the Second World War, the 'Dutch Guiana League,' which occasionally made itself heard during the war, was founded. [It] had ties with the growing 'Negro movement' in the United States" (Van de Walle 1975:19); there was at some stage also a branch of the League of Coloured People in Suriname, which helped to reinforce race consciousness. After 1940 the group working at this objective became even stronger (Van Lier 1971:210-11).

July 1 and emancipation had clearly shaken the colonial-government-approved Moravian Church's hold. Still, emancipation discourse hardly shed its Christian overtones. Rier had his own evangelization congregation, the Rijts brothers were soapbox preachers, Comvalius praised Christian education (Comvalius 1919:5), and AMEC was in fact an international religious community. Even though these people held up the Christian role model as an example of development, progress, and liberation, it was nevertheless a Christianity of their own choosing: it was without ties to the colonial authorities and it had its own substance. In contrast, the Moravian Church, though it had always been a black working-class church insofar as its members were Afro-Surinamese and the language in which they professed their faith was Sranan, continued to have very European leaders, and the message preached in its churches reinforced the status quo. With their ties to the diaspora, the new evangelists, more than the Moravians, conveyed a true grass-roots Christianity, so that they posed a threat to the status quo, despite their loyalty to God and the Dutch monarchy and their use of the Dutch language as a means for progress. The new evangelists sparked a fight for, and introduced a pride of, the Afro-Surinamese character at a time when the government wanted to integrate this part of the population into the Dutch culture. Ethno-awareness has since been associated with the July 1 celebrations, while religion gradually, though not entirely, disappeared from it. It returned in part, however, in the course of the twentieth century, as little by little, the Surinamization of the Moravian Church's leadership, as well as that of the Roman Catholic Church, began, which stimulated loyalty to these church communities. It is worth noting, in this context, that in an article on cultural emancipation in the 1958 *Emancipatieblad* both the Moravian and Roman Catholic missions were praised for their sustained efforts to work "at the religious and social edification of the creoles, that is, at their cultural and social emancipation," whereupon a plea followed to involve in "the process of cultural development" the Maroons in the Surinamese interior, who were not yet converted to Christianity. Even after independence, Afro-Surinamese continued to be loyal to the Church, as is clear in an evaluation of the 125th anniversary of emancipation, which stated that thanks were owed to the missions for their pioneering work in the field of "conversion and civilization" to this day.

The Afro-Surinamese awakening continued to be linked to a considerable extent with the colonial discourse of God, the Dutch monarchy, and most of all, Dutch civilization. The didacticism observed by Higman (1998) in most British Caribbean commemorations also dominated the Surinamese July 1st discourse, in which the Christian morality of emancipation by God was supplemented with the bourgeois morality of striving

for the social progress of the Afro-Surinamese group.²³ Radical rhetoric, as could be heard elsewhere in the Afro-Caribbean emancipation discourse as much as a century earlier (see Brereton 1996), was hardly conceivable in Suriname until World War II.²⁴ Even after emancipation, one author went so far as to say, with reference to Emancipation Day, that "it turns out that assimilation to the Western cultural pattern and the interethnic acculturation process have certainly influenced ethnic attitudes, and for the better."²⁵ In addition to the Church and the government, the ethnic factor should also be considered for the role it played in the struggle for July 1 as an arena of awakening.

THE ETHNIC FACTOR

Particularly on July 1, many descendants of slavery have referred to internalized feelings of inferiority that are an indisputable legacy of slavery, and that seem to have gone virtually unaltered. The trauma stems directly from the long history of slavery, segregation, and racism, and it was stimulated by ethnic rivalry that gradually arose with the arrival of indentured workers from Asia who were said to be given preferential treatment by colonial authorities. Moreover, as a unified group unburdened by the slavery past, it was much easier to out-distance the Afro-Surinamese, thereby giving rise to friction.

Worth noting is the similarity in two action programs announced around July 1, 1928 and 1993. The first originated with the Afrikaansch Gemeenschappelijk Verbond (African Joint Union), which was closely associated with the Emancipation Committee that helped structure the July 1 celebrations in the late 1920s, and in which Comvalius was still doing pio-

23. The fact that the Dutch standard of civilization set the tune may be clear most of all from the fact that the Maroons were not regarded as an equivalent part of that progress.

24. Brereton writes about the August 1 – Emancipation Day – celebrations in Trinidad: "One speaker at the 1849 banquet, for instance, called on the descendants of the free coloureds to proclaim their kinship with, and sympathy for, the ex-slaves, pointing to the example of Alexandre Dumas, who proudly announced his African ancestry. Another felt free to paint a lurid picture of the horrors of slavery, stating unequivocally that African slavery in the New World was worse than any form of bondage in human history, and stressing the guilt of the slave owners, 'blood-stained and insolent usurpers.' Such speeches, and supporting editorials and letters in the press, reveal a new self-confidence on the part of these educated coloureds, who were self-consciously constructing an ideology of racial identity for themselves" (Brereton 1996:88).

25. *De West*, June 30, 1988. Given the Indian background of the author of this evaluation, it is, however, possible, that the view he expresses is not entirely representative of the views on emancipation in Afro-Surinamese circles.

neering work.²⁶ The points of action included, at the time, “bringing together all Negroes” so that they could get to know, appreciate, and love one another more and learn to be proud of themselves and one another; improving their social position and fighting the contempt for their own group; promoting harmony and fighting “divisive elements” within the group, such as “selfishness” or “spitefulness.”²⁷ Sixty-five years later, on the 130th anniversary of emancipation, the Emancipation Commemoration Committee, which had been called the Emancipation Committee until then, issued a ten-point proclamation that pleaded for:

- a movement [to bring about] the mental liberation of the Afro-Surinamese ... the decolonization of the spirit and the realization of constant changes in the thought processes of the Afro-Surinamese;
- strategies ... for developing inner processes of a black consciousness so that 1) Afro-Surinamese may identify themselves as an ethnic group; 2) the myths and stereotypes stigmatizing the Afro-Surinamese are disposed of; 3) the group identity and solidarity are promoted;
- the education, re-education and training of the young and for the cultivation of the will to be oneself and not to develop a negative self-image.²⁸

Evidently, Comvalius’s (1913:77) call to “no longer regard your ‘being a Negro’ as the condition that may pull you down, but acknowledge your origin and honor it” had not yet met with general acceptance.²⁹ Nonetheless, since Rier, voices were being heard that were a sort of counterbalance, propagating the superiority of the African “race.” These voices drew upon the Bible story that the Europeans had formerly used to legitimize slavery, that is, the cursing of Noah’s son Ham after he had mocked his father and been expelled from the house and condemned to eternal servitude as a punishment. Ham was supposed to be the ancestor of the Africans. The voices promoting the

26. The chairman of the AGV was J. Vriese; Comvalius was the secretary of the Emancipation Committee, and A.L. Waaldijk was the editor of the *Emancipatie Courant*.

27. *Emancipatie Courant*, July 1, 1928.

28. Declaration of July 1, 1993, printed in *De Ware Tijd* (July 3, 1993) and signed by the Emancipation Commemoration Committee, which consisted of Dr. A. Kramp (chairman), Mrs. I. Dest, née Day, R. Bottse, Mrs. N. Becker, and R. Spa.

29. In this July 1 speech Comvalius (1913:84) attributed the lack of progress among Afro-Surinamese to “the total absence of cooperation; losing sight of social differences; but especially the contempt for your being a Negro.” In his opinion his companions in the United States were doing much better, judging by “the great Negro professor Dr. Booker Washington from Alabama” (Comvalius 1913:86). There are, Comvalius (1913:88) says, “in our Surinamese society thousands of people ... who deny their being a Negro. We think that no credit can be gained from the fact that he tries to prove mathematically of wishes to argue philosophically that he is not a Negro, however close the color of his skin may be to any other race.”

superiority of the African race interpreted the story to mean that God had put Ham and his offspring to the test, precisely because they were His chosen people. Rier first clearly formulated this interpretation of the story,³⁰ while the AMEC and the Rijts brothers first brought out into the open the idea of the Africans as God's chosen people (Verhees 2000:313-14). In 1918 the Rijts brothers launched a movement and a periodical named after Ham's grandson, Nimrod, the first powerful king on earth. This periodical was devoted to "the spiritual and material interests of the full-blooded Negroes in the colony of Suriname," and only "full-blooded Negroes" could subscribe to it (Verhees 2000:309).³¹ Nine years later another periodical appeared which was edited by one of the Rijts brothers and bore the title "De Neger-Christenen of het Vierde Koninkrijk van het Christendom" (the Negro Christians or the Fourth Kingdom of Christianity). According to it, the African "race" would ultimately bring God's kingdom to earth, after all other races had failed to do so.³² Later, too, echoes of this interpretation of the story of Ham could be heard. And while it seems an inversion of the European Bible interpretation, in reality it probably marked a shift toward a more diasporan way of thinking, for the Afro-Surinamese claimed the Biblical role of the Jews. Not the Jews – who had formed a substantial part of the colonial elite in Suriname since the beginning of slavery – but the exiled Africans were the tried, the chosen people.³³

30. Rier stated that God's purpose for scattering the Hamites was to give them training for edification by means of oppression and humiliation. "We, too – children of the Ethiopians, Dutch subjects – have been entrusted by God to the house of the Netherlands, as servants of God, to form us into useful citizens for here and the life hereafter" (Rier 1904:27). Moreover, science has proved "that the Hamites are just as much susceptible, if not more so, to development, improvement, etc." (Rier 1904:31).

31. Such an extreme form of Afro-centrism of the blood, difficult to keep up in Suriname, where a large proportion of the Afro-Surinamese population has at least one non-African ancestor, and often more, has remained an exception. Rier, for example, explicitly addressed the "children of the Ethiopians, [of] mixed or unmixed blood" (Rier 1904:37), and Comvalius (1919:2) expressed his joy that, according to him, the division between light and dark-colored Afro-Suriname had closed since the Golden Jubilee of Emancipation, and he said, "these days most colored people feel one with their race, the Negro race."

32. This periodical appeared only once (see Van Lier 1977:281; Verhees 2000:309-14).

33. This does not mean that the Afro-Surinamese consciousness-raising movement has any anti-Semitic nuances. There are several Jewish people with Jewish names in the emancipation committees (for example, in 1938, del Prado, de Miranda, H.J. de Vries), while in 1927 Comvalius, who describes himself as "pitch-black," (1919:11) thanks, in his July 1 speech titled "Strengthening of the Sense of Race," the Moravian Church and the AMEC, "but above all the Israelite community for their contribution and attention to the emancipation celebrations" (*Emancipatie Courant*, July 2, 1928).

The descendants of the enslaved Africans also felt chosen in another way. They liked to present themselves as the only true Surinamese, apart from the largely marginalized indigenous people. Their status of “true Surinamese” was, and still is, often brought up in relation to the existing rivalry with other segments of the population, and July 1 has provided a suitable platform for it. In 1904 Rier (1904:46) asked himself, rhetorically, “hasn’t immigration, devised and carried out to keep our country from ruin and to guarantee a prosperous future – on the pretext that the Hamites are lazy – partly pushed aside the advancement of the emancipated? Weren’t the immigrants rated above us in nearly everything?”

Fifty years later, the 1958 *Emancipatieblad* clearly illustrated how ethnicity was linked to Emancipation Day and emerging political nationalism. Its opening article stated that although the descendants of the enslaved no longer constituted the majority of the population, certainly “it is this group that provided the basis for what we tend to call Surinamese ... If there is a Surinamese people one day, these *eerstkomers* [those who came first] will have to claim and uphold their birthright so that order may come at last.” Then E.W. Rellum says that he no longer has visions of the whip and shackles during the July 1 commemoration, but of “the Negro who ... shows the world in a fair fight that he is *not inferior in anything*. And that given time and opportunity he will show himself to be *superior* in many things” (Rier 1904:46). He counsels,

Don’t be discouraged if, in comparison, some group in some way is doing better than you. They did not have the same troubles as your ancestors in the past. On the contrary, let it be an incentive to you to work even harder, strong in the conviction that we, children of Mother Africa, are capable of great things.³⁴

This *Emancipatieblad* concludes with a poem by E.D. Rellum from 1915 that reflects both the ethnic rivalry and the feeling – or is it a wish? – of being the chosen one:

The Negro’s tomorrow!
Though I must be the object of derision today
And of contempt by “yellow” and “white”
Tomorrow the day will surely dawn for the Negro
That he will justly be in a leading position.

Tomorrow being “black” will no longer be inferior
Tomorrow “black” will demonstrate his equality
In the great race for the precedence of the races
“Black” will reach the finish first.

34. Eugène W. Rellum in *Het Emancipatieblad*, 1958.

Tomorrow may show the world what Negroes can do
 The top is not just for the white race
 Tomorrow will see "Negro energy!" "Negro greatness!"
 "Moral courage!" "Negro courage!" "Negro power!"³⁵

J. van de Walle does not shrink from the proposition that, if there had been no ethnic rivalry in Suriname between the formerly enslaved and Asians, the July 1 commemoration would have lost much of its importance, just like in Curaçao. However, halfway through the twentieth century it seemed

as if they said to everyone willing to listen, "now look, this is our day. This day brings to mind the time when we, Creoles, wrested Suriname from [Mother] [N]ature under inhuman conditions. Our Suriname has now become a sort of colony inhabited by foreigners, Chinese, Coolies and Javanese. Yet this country is ours. We have built it. Nobody else!" (Van de Walle 1975:49-50)

Van de Walle adds almost cynically that Emancipation Day made little impression on those immigrants and their descendants. Nevertheless, attempts have been made to turn July 1 into a less exclusively Afro-Surinamese celebration. Although in 1919 Comvalius concurred with the Public Interest Committee's wish to publicly declare that the governor should make July 1 a national holiday, because "we are the majority of the population in the colony; so it is reasonable that our day of liberty should be acknowledged as a special one" (Comvalius 1919:2), it was not actually made a national holiday until 1960, when it was renamed the "Day of Liberties," and it was intended for the entire population.³⁶ In practice, however, it remained primarily an Afro-Surinamese celebration, clear from, for instance, its being referred to in popular speech as *Manspasi* (Sranan for *emancipation*) or *Keti Koti*. A sociologist of Hindustani-Surinamese origin remembers:

The day the abolition of slavery is celebrated in Suriname, 1 July, is not simply a day-off, it's a national holiday. This is especially noticeable in the *Kleine Markt*: bands playing Creole music and Creole women dancing in traditional *kotomisie* dress dominate the scene. Typical too are the porters and odd-job men, and the numerous Surinamese soft drinks and snacks, which are handed out to everyone for next to nothing, including to the Hindustani, Chinese and Javanese people, who also watch the spectacle, though usually from a respectful distance. However familiar it all may be, celebrating the abolition of slavery continues to seem a little strange [to them]. (Gowricharn 2001:123)

35. This poem has five stanzas; these are the second, third, and fifth stanzas.

36. *Suralco Magazine* 21, 1997. The *Encyclopedie van Suriname* (1977:203) incorrectly states that Emancipation Day has been a national holiday since July 1, 1864.

In 1984 the day was even renamed "Day of National Unity," though that was a one-time occasion because July 1 marked the end of Ramadan for the Javanese and Muslim Hindustanis.³⁷ On July 1, 1993, however, the Emancipation Commemoration Committee issued a declaration, the first point of which read, "to record for posterity, particularly the descendants of Afro-Surinamese, and in connection with the fact that July 1, 1863 is of intrinsic and historical value wholly and solely to this segment of the population, this day shall, as of today, be known to us as Ketu Koti."³⁸

Not everyone agreed with that. A high-profile Afro-Surinamese member of the National Assembly, Frank Playfair, held the view that on July 1 the abolition of a specific production system was being commemorated, and that, in fact, concerned all people.³⁹ These opinions and views coexist on Emancipation Day, and people seem to have chosen the term that best suits him or her. And so it happened that in 1998, President Wijdenbosch cordially invited everyone to the 135th anniversary of Ketu Koti Dey, the Suriname Postal Corporation brought out a special stamp on the occasion of Ketu Koti, wishing all Surinamese a *swiet' Manspasi*, while the same company announced that it would close early because of the "Day of Liberties" on July 1.⁴⁰

Throughout the twentieth century, there was similar confusion about the terms used by Afro-Surinamese to refer to themselves. There has always been a difference between politically conscious and more traditional, perhaps more popular, terminology. Some elderly people in particular still use the term *ningre* (Negro) to this day, many call themselves *blacka man/uma* (black man/woman), particularly light-colored people refer to themselves as *creool/kreoro*, and Afro-Surinamese in general often use the term *Surinamer/Srananman* to indicate their own group. The claim that *Surinamer* is synonymous with "Afro-Surinamese" is, of course, a political statement in the ethnic rivalry: "we have the oldest rights."

In official discourse, too, the terminology used on July 1, the day on which the Afro-Surinamese present themselves as a group, changed and was indicative of a changing consciousness. The official churches had always referred to the enslaved and their descendants as *ningre* or "Negroes." The consciousness-raising evangelists like Rier and Rijts consistently used "Ethiopians." In doing so they concurred with the new diaspora discourse, which came from the United States and later Africa and Jamaica (see Price 2003) where Baptists and leaders like Wilmot Blyden and Marcus Garvey were active, and became highly popular in the diaspora for a time. This discourse was

37. *De Ware Tijd*, June 29, 1984.

38. *De Ware Tijd*, July 3, 1993.

39. *De Ware Tijd*, July 3, 1993.

40. *De West*, June 30, 1998.

simultaneously viewed from outside the diaspora by the established order with distrust because of its anticolonial and Afrocentric character. Thus, Rijts was watched closely by some Moravian missionaries on suspicion of being influenced by the Ethiopianists from the United States. Governor Staal wrote in the late 1920s,

For some years, attempts have been made from outside to introduce something into Suriname that could be termed a nationalist aspiration, a sort of Negro-Zionism: the return of Ethiopians to Africa. This Ethiopianism has not, however, found acceptance (Staal 1927:349).⁴¹

The matter was not taken very seriously, for it was assumed that the Afro-Surinamese were too well off, and besides, would be surpassed by the Asian immigrants (Verhees 2000:315). Ethiopianism never in fact did develop into a mass movement in Suriname like it did in Jamaica. The position of the Moravians was probably too strong for that, perhaps partly because they also used Ethiopianist rhetoric from time to time. For example, the president of the Moravian Church, Voullaire (1913:75-76), spoke of "the Ethiopian race"⁴² in 1913 in a lecture on the Surinamese "race issue."

There has always been much more discussion in Suriname about the word "Negro" and direct references to Africa than about Ethiopianism. In his July 1 speech about race, Voullaire (1913:74) stated,

Just what exactly is the crux of our race issue in Suriname, which is causing so much commotion? We answer: nothing but the memory of slavery, which has not yet been obliterated. The fact that the word *negro*, which simply and solely means a *black person*, and consequently obviously indicates race and is interpreted in this way all over the world, is used and interpreted here as a synonym of *slave*, explains everything and also proves that two notions have got mixed up. Once this practice has been corrected, it is to be expected that it could contribute considerably to peace and quiet.

It appears that many people found the term "negro" hard to accept because it was interpreted as a synonym of "slave." In the diaspora, especially in the United States, however, it was the term that was coming into vogue, in particular "Negro" with a capital *N*. Comvalius joined in by consciously promoting the term "Negro." He spoke of "Negrohood," "Negroness," the

41. In a note Staal (1927:349) added, "is it an echo of it that is heard in the name of the 'Committee for the celebration of July 1 as a general day of thanksgiving for the strengthening of the sense of race'?" This was the Emancipation Committee that Comvalius was also a part of.

42. There were no ideological connotations in Voullaire's use of the term Ethiopian. His speech makes it perfectly clear that he only used it to differentiate it from the other human races, i.e. Caucasian, Mongolian, Malaysian, and Amerindian.

progress of the “Negro race,” and of the July 1 celebration as the “Negro celebration” (Comvalius 1913; 1919). He did not exclude anyone, like the Rijts brothers did, for his use of the term “Negro” included everyone with some African blood in their veins. Not surprisingly, he fulminated against “some brown Negroes” who took no notice of their race, particularly those who had risen to great social heights. Some of these were even said to deny their origins, and Comvalius ascertained in his July 1 speech that there “will not be just a few who will wish to protest vigorously and prove mathematically that they are *not* negroes, for [to them] a Negro is only the pitch-black person standing before you this evening” (Comvalius 1919:11). Comvalius touched a nerve with the Afro-Surinamese and did not attempt to avoid ensuing discussions, but rather tried to initiate them. To him, “Negro” was an almost honorary nickname that was part of the identity of those who would neither deny their existence or their past in slavery. In the *Emancipatie Courant* of July 1, 1928, Comvalius published an article taken from the U.S. periodical, *The Crisis*, in which an Afro-American student argued in favor of abolishing the term “Negro”: “Negro or nigger is a white man’s word to make us feel inferior. I hope that this word will be abolished.” Comvalius commented that “yes, that name annoys many in Suriname, but it would be better if they gradually bring themselves to acknowledge their Negrohood. We are not inferior to others.”⁴³

It seems that Comvalius was proved right in the 1940s, because Van Lier (1971:281) observed in his 1949 thesis that “the word ‘Negro’ is gradually losing its offensive sound for people from the black community.” In 1947 a party was even founded that bore the word “Negro” in its name: the Negro-Political Party.” At the same time, however, another discussion began about a new term. The colonial civil servant Van de Walle, who first worked on Curaçao, related in his memoirs of his time in Suriname, that in 1943 he had to give a lecture about the differences between Antilleans and Surinamese, and had to look for an alternative word for *creool*, simply because it was not used in the Antilles. The historian, J.F.E. Einaar, “who was well informed about the developments among the Negroes of America” (Van de Walle 1975:72) and also a member of the Emancipation Commemoration Committee, suggested that Van de Walle use the term “Afro-American,” which was being used more and more, especially in the United States:

All colored people in the western hemisphere who are originally of African descent could be called by this name, Einaar thought. I was quite happy, for I thought the idea fresh and original. The word caused a commotion during the lecture, which was attended by many Creoles. The audience had taken offense to the prefix “Afro-.” For them, Africa was a sort of wilderness inhabited by uncivilized people. Perhaps some sort of civilization

43. *Emancipatie Courant* 1928.

would flourish there at some time in the distant future, but it did not look as though it would for the time being.

In short, in that environment and in those days it was painful to recall that the civilization of Suriname partly came from Africa. I had always been surprised at the success of generations of Benjamins and Van Ommerens,⁴⁴ who referred to the ties between Surinamese and Dutchmen with stubborn one-sidedness. After my lecture, a man asked to speak. I knew him as an excellent essayist, and he had contributed to the daily *De West* many articles, written in at times humorous and always refined Dutch. His name was Comvalius, and he had been trained as a teacher. I expected a question, but he said quite simply, "I'm not an Afro-American. I'm a Negro," a point of view that is often defended in present-day North America by young, progressive colored people, who, in their isolation, wish to put things clearly even though, in addition to outward similarities with the Africans, have also been defined by their American heritage.

People who did not attend the lecture but read a report on it in the newspaper, reflected on the notion of Afro-American. A well-known physician, whom I had always regarded as a typical Creole Dutchman, brought it up. His projection was the following: in the future, the African countries would play an important role on the world stage. When he said this, during the war years, virtually all of Africa was colonized, either to some extent or wholly, and his prediction amazed me. He was right ... [But he was the exception, because] thirty years ago the word "Afro" was seen as a term of abuse coming from an outsider who wanted to insult and ridicule the Surinamese. (Van de Walle 1975:72-73, 134)

Therefore it was not until independence, and for some much later, that a term like "Afro-Suriname," with its reference to Africa, stopped being felt as offensive. Until that time, "Negro" was used widely, and on the hundredth anniversary of emancipation, ethnic consciousness-raising, begun by Rier, was described, without any embarrassment, as "Negro nationalism" and "National Negro Consciousness."⁴⁵ Yet "Negro" was gradually overshadowed by "*Creool*": "As a *Creool* one considers Negroes to be the descendants of Negroes and anything in between."⁴⁶

There was a gradually increasing demand because of the demographic shifts in the ethnically compartmentalized politics of Suriname for a term that could encompass everyone who was non-Asian, and *Creool* was the answer. Likewise, the Maroons, who, until then, had always been referred to as the Bush Negroes, were officially called *Boslandcreolen*. These were also the terms used in the Emancipation centenary celebrations in 1963, and the terminology continues to be used today. However, in the last few years

44. Benjamins was the Inspector of Education and co-author of the *Encyclopedia of the Dutch West Indies* (1914-17). Van Ommeren was a newspaper publisher and journalist, as well as a politician.

45. *De West*, June 22, 1963.

46. *Het Emancipatieblad* 1958, p. 4.

there has been a change, which is expressed around the July 1 celebrations in particular. There has been a move to link the terminology to developments in the diaspora, particularly those in the United States. In the July 1 declaration of 1993, the *Emancipation Commemoration Committee* only speaks of Afro-Surinamese, which has been customary since for individuals and organizations concerned with Afro-Surinamese awakening and cultural heritage.

It is no longer even shocking to speak of African-Surinamese. On July 1, 1996, sixteen Afro-Surinamese cultural organizations formed the *Feydrasi fu Grupu fu Afrikan Srananman* (Federation of African-Surinamese Cultural Groups), headed by Iwan Wijngaarde. Their aim is the unity and social and cultural elevation of the Afro-Surinamese, the rewriting of history, and the rehabilitation of the ancestors (Melker 2001:159). Even the Surinamese president, Venetiaan, frequently used the term “Afro-Surinamese” in an opening speech at an international conference on the African in diaspora, held in Paramaribo on the occasion of the 140th anniversary of Emancipation, nevertheless pointing out “that the period in which the African roots were denied was not long past. A denial that manifested itself in attacks on persons who were unwilling to acknowledge privately that there were lines that traced their origins back to ‘Mother Africa.’”⁴⁷

Finally, there are the Maroons who reject their official name of *Boslandcreolen* (literally, bush Creoles). They have always considered themselves as having been responsible for their own emancipation, as opposed to the plantation slaves who, in their view, were only granted their freedom by the whites. This antagonism increased over the years as they were largely ignored or even frustrated in their – often modest – demands by the government in Paramaribo, even when this was dominated by Afro-Surinamese. For that reason the Maroons have hardly supported the urban emancipation commemorations even to this day. They have even established their own day of commemoration, Maroon Day, which is celebrated on October 10 and marks the day the first peace treaty between the colonial government and the Ndyuka Maroons was signed in 1760. Maroons in Suriname, as well as in the Netherlands, have commemorated the day of their liberation struggle since the late 1970s-early 1980s. Despite several requests, the national government of Suriname is not willing to recognize Maroon Day as an official holiday (see Pakosie 2001, 2004).

For the first fifty years after 1863, July 1 was a continuation of the pacification policy that had been launched decades before the abolition of slavery, rather than a point at which Surinamese – let alone the Afro-Surinamese – national identity was experienced or from which it was developed in the same way that, according to Nora, for example, “Armistice Day memorials

47. *De Ware Tijd* June 24, 2003, on website.

... seemed to exemplify an important aspect of the idea of "Frenchness."⁴⁸ It has never acquired this instrumental role in the shaping of Surinamese national identity. It is a commemoration by the Afro-Surinamese nation, not the Surinamese nation. In the 1960s and 1970s attempts were made, it is true, to turn it, as the Day of Liberties and possibly part of the "fraternization policy" – a pragmatic alliance of Afro-Surinamese and Hindustani political parties to bridge ethnic antagonism – into a *lieu de mémoire* for all Surinamese. Under the influence of increasing ethnic rivalry between Afro-Surinamese and Indian Surinamese, July 1 has been claimed increasingly more by the former in the last few decades. To them alone it is a true *lieu de mémoire*. As a matter of fact, it may still be part of the national memory and/or of nation building for, in a state such as Suriname which has the motto "unity in diversity," the variety of ethnically defined *lieux de mémoire* may be part of the emerging unity, although Nora never meant it that way.

SECULARIZATION

Since Rier took the emancipation celebration beyond the confines of the Moravian Church at the beginning of the twentieth century, this commemoration has become increasingly secular and popular, although it has never completely broken away from the Church, nor from a strong didacticism, although this didacticism came to be charged with ethnical and cultural consciousness-raising. The various Emancipation Day committees that, since Rier, took it upon themselves to organize the July 1 celebrations and publish, yearly, if possible, Emancipation papers, did much to influence the shift in this didacticism. Partly as a result of the shift away from church didacticism, the Afro-Surinamese started to pay more attention to their own distinctive culture and history.⁴⁹ The consciousness of colonial history that had surrounded Emancipation for so long and had thus obscured the slavery past gave way tentatively to a history with its own heroes and a cultural heritage of which Surinamese could be proud. The nationalists of the post-World War II period gave this history a further boost (see Marshall 2003).⁵⁰

48. See the introduction to Nora 1996, volume II.

49. Consider also the work of "Papa" Koenders, a school teacher and cultural activist who was one of the first to promote Sranan, the Surinamese Creole language, instead of the colonial "national" language, Dutch. He also strongly promoted turning July 1 into a national holiday.

50. The nationalists of the post-World War II period, a group of mainly Afro-Surinamese intellectually led by Eddy Bruma, were trained, as well as radicalized, in the Netherlands. They wanted, for example, to declare Suriname an independent country on the centennial of Emancipation Day in 1963 (see Jansen van Galen 2000:327).

The most tangible expression of these changes on July 1 are the various monuments that were put up in Suriname. On the occasion of the centenary in 1963, Prime Minister Pengel, the leader of the largest Afro-Surinamese political party, unveiled a liberty statue, made by the Afro-Surinamese artist Josef Klas, which represented a slave shaking off his chains. That same day, Governor Currie held a speech in Paramaribo in which he recalled that on the very same spot, 130 years ago, the enslaved Codjo, Mentor, and Present “were put to death [for arson] in a degrading manner. For it [the execution] makes us realize once again what a brutal system slavery must have been, at least for those who were forced to live under it.”⁵¹ Furthermore, Currie’s wife planted an “emancipation tree” in Paramaribo,⁵² and another – abstract – memorial was put up in the district of Nickerie, where other monuments had been unveiled, with the first one in 1938.⁵³ There was another emancipation tree planted in the district of Coronie. Ten years later, a statue of Alida,⁵⁴ the ultimate symbol of the cruelty of the slavery system in the Afro-Surinamese historical consciousness, was erected in the town of Wageningen (Suriname). At the 1984 Emancipation commemoration, in Coronie, Prime Minister Udenhout laid the first stone for the statue of Tata Colin, the messianic leader of an aborted rebellion in 1836. Less public, but no less monumental and symbolic, was the presentation of the on-line registers listing all the slaves emancipated in 1863 to President Venetiaan on the occasion of the 140th commemoration in 2003. Clearly, these monuments also mark the very active role the government has come to play in promoting a new historical consciousness.

Until the 1960s, the role of the government – it was still a colonial government at the time – was appeasing rather than encouraging when it came to the July 1 commemoration. Traditionally, the governor was presented with an aubade by hundreds of schoolchildren on July 1, and he helped maintain the mythologization of the day by praising the special relationship between the Afro-Surinamese population and William III and his royal descendants and giving thanks to them in their role as a kind of patron/patroness of the former. This item, however, disappeared from the program in the 1960s and has been replaced by an official reception hosted by the head of government. Moreover, it was the government that provided, and still provides, the

51. *De West* July 2, 1963.

52. At the corner of Saramaccastraat and Zwartenhovenbrugstraat.

53. In 1938 on Commissarisplein, at the corner of Voorstraat and Emmastraat; in 1963 at the corner of Voorstraat and Waterloostraat (see *Suralco Magazine* 1997:1).

54. Alida’s mistress, Susanna Duplessis, is said to have drowned Alida’s child in her presence because it was crying. The jealous woman cut off one of Alida’s breasts and fed it to her own unfaithful husband.

facilities and resources for a broad-based popular celebration. Boat races on the Suriname River have been organized for years, just as they were on the King's or Queen's birthday: they were, in fact, a continuation of an old tradition from the days of slavery.⁵⁵ Sports events became a part of the July 1 ritual at an early date. Not only the authorities encouraged these activities, but the Emancipation committees, too, motivated by their didactic and educational ambition, used them to reach as wide an audience as possible. In 1927, for example, this citizens' committee organized a soccer tournament for which the prize was the "Emancipation Challenge Cup," because "sports have made great progress in the last few years, and have brought together many heterogeneous groups."⁵⁶ The names of the participating teams incidentally, sounded very colonial, for they were the same as those of Dutch soccer teams: Ajax, Excelsior, Go Ahead, and MVV. Sports events have formed a fixed part of July 1 activities, and they have been a means of involving people other than the Afro-Surinamese in celebrations.

In addition to sports, an increasing number of cultural events have come to be included on the July 1 program. *Koto misi* shows and other traditional costume processions, usually accompanied by music and often the military band, have been a set item since at least the 1950s.

Since the 1950s, too, special theatrical productions dealing with the slavery past have invariably been performed on July 1. These productions are put on by both professional troupes as well as by amateurs. Amateur troupes, in particular, originated in the 1920s and are a continuation of the dramatic tradition from the days of slavery. Comvalius greatly stimulated this tradition,⁵⁷ and since the 1950s, cultural nationalists and various organizations have given it a substantial boost (Van Kempen 2002, IV:289-309).

The sports, cultural, and theatrical activities have helped to bring into focus the slavery past, even though this focus is often on the exoticness of cruelty. For example, there is a beauty contest held yearly that is named after Alida, the female slave that was treated so brutally by Susanna Duplessis, and Van de Walle observed in the 1940s and 1950s that

in spite of the, at times, somewhat pathetic nature of the emancipation celebrations, they pointed to the desperation, cruelty, and arbitrariness which characterized slavery. A sort of folklore emerged about it. Gruesome tales

55. When slaves from the various plantations rowed their masters to Paramaribo and back, they would hold races.

56. *Emancipatie Courant* January 1928.

57. Comvalius published, for example, *Krioro: Een bijdrage tot de kennis van het lied, de dans en de folklore van Suriname* (193x) and *Iets over het Surinaamsche lied: Een bijdrage tot de kennis van de folklore van de kolonie Suriname* (1922). See also Van Kempen 2002 (4):213.

circulated. Brunings, who was both a civil servant and an actor ... could even show me a vault in my office where one Mrs. Lesseps was said to have personally tortured her male and female slaves to death. Sailing on the river in her costly "tent boat," this peculiar sadist was said to have forced mothers to throw their own children into the water ... At one time, Brunings claimed, she had lived in the house that now accommodated our clerk's office, and if you worked overtime at night, you could still hear the screams of the victims. (Van de Walle 1975:50)

Additionally, cultural roots activities, ranging from meetings and performances of traditional dance and music, to workshops on natural medicine and medicinal plants, are being organized with increasing frequency, especially since independence in 1975.

An Emancipation Day party is not a party if there are not many opportunities for dancing, eating, and drinking, organized either privately, by organizations, or by Afro-Surinamese political parties. Shopkeepers are keen to take advantage of the opportunity, judging by the numerous Ketu Ketu specials and Mansipasi sales, particularly of fashion, food (e.g. "emancipation chops"), and drinks. Even in the commercial opportunism there are hints of didacticism, as in a 1958 advertisement in *Emancipatieblad* for Surinamese Parbo beer, which shows a drawing of a self-assured black man with a glass of Parbo beer and a text that says, "help give meaning to the *emancipation* of your country. Support your own country's manufacturing industry. A country will never become great without a flourishing industry." Noteworthy is the only other illustrated advertisement in the same paper, one for Heineken beer, in which a white waiter carrying a large glass of Heineken on a serving tray says, "Your Heineken, Sir." The caption underneath says, "*Heineken bierie, wrokoman priesierie*" (Heineken beer, a working man's pleasure). Although the text itself is not emancipatory, it is the only one in Sranan. Gradually more texts about Emancipation Day, including advertisements, have begun to appear in Sranan. Language, indeed, is a crucial part of the emancipation struggle of the Afro-Surinamese population (see, for example, Eersel 1997).

Since July 1 escaped from the confines of the Church, the process of folklorization entailed on the one hand informal fun and Emancipation Day as a popular festival that did not pose a threat to social relations and seemed rather to perpetuate them. It had begun in colonial times in order to make the commemoration acceptable to everybody, including the colonial authorities. The Surinamese authorities continued it as part of the ethnic "fraternization policy" and general nation building. On the other hand, folklorization has resulted in the growing Afro-Surinamese awakening because it allows for room to express the cultural distinctiveness that had been formed since the beginning of slavery, but that had been eclipsed for many, many years

by colonial cultural assimilation policy. The loss of cultural distinctiveness was reversed as a result of the emergence, from the 1950s onward, of Afro-Surinamese nationalists, who linked cultural emancipation to an anti-colonial discourse.⁵⁸ Although this nationalism eventually led to the decolonization of Suriname, July 1 seemed to folklorize rather than radicalize as a public forum for the Afro-Surinamese. Indeed, nation building, rather than group emancipation, was the motto in this period. However, the number of organizations active in promoting this cultural distinctiveness is increasing, and gradually more attempts are being made to draw closer to similar initiatives elsewhere in the diaspora, particularly those in Anglophone regions and the Netherlands.

It is only since the 1980s that the folkloristic Emancipation Day has become more politically charged. This is no surprise really, for as a result of a military dictatorship, an internal armed conflict, followed by a return to democracy, Surinamese society as a whole has become politicized. Since the “revolutionary” 1980s, July 1 has increasingly been reclaimed as a pre-eminently Afro-Surinamese platform, while the commemoration of what happened during slavery is given shape and emphasis in much more radical terms. An Afro-Surinamese committee, for example, demanded that no fewer than four squares in the center of Paramaribo should be named after Cojo, Mentor, and Present, formerly depicted as the criminal slaves who had set fire to Paramaribo, but honored nowadays as resistance heroes. Eventually, a part of one square was named after the three of them (Melker 2001:154-66). Increasingly more attempts are being made to join the diaspora. These attempts are largely an interaction with the Afro-Surinamese diaspora community in the Netherlands, where a large number of organizations united in the National Slavery Past Platform succeeded in getting the slavery past and its legacy on the political agenda. Renewed focus on the slavery past has led, in the Netherlands, to the creation of a national monument and an institute, both meant to make the slavery past visible (see Oostindie 2001).⁵⁹ Moreover, attempts are being made to establish contact with the diaspora elsewhere in the Americas, particularly in the United States, where there are increasingly louder calls for “reparations” which are starting to resonate

58. Little attention is paid to the role of these nationalists in this paper because others have done more research on the nationalists (the work of, for example, John Jansen van Galen [2000], Peter Meel [2001], and Edwin Marshall [2003]). It is true however, that the nationalists have been of great importance to the breaking of the silence on the slavery past and the revaluation of Afro-Surinamese culture, but they have not specifically used the emancipation commemorations to this end.

59. As a result of this public attention for the slavery past at the UN Antiracism Conference in Durban in 2001, a Dutch government minister speaking on behalf of his government, expressed his “deep remorse” for the Dutch slavery past.

in Suriname.⁶⁰ By way of example, the *Stichting 1 juli Ketj Koti* recently decided that it would join diaspora activities abroad because it had been cut off from them for too long.⁶¹

The reclaiming of Emancipation Day as a distinctive Afro-Surinamese event, as well as the renewed linking up with the African diaspora elsewhere, seems to run parallel to what Higman found elsewhere in the, mostly Anglophone, Caribbean:

The abandonment of Emancipation Day by some territories around the time of independence suggests a willing embrace of modernization models and hopes for a bold new era freed from the injustices of the past. The revival of Emancipation Day in the 1980s and 1990s parallels a general disillusionment with those modernizing paradigms and a need to recognize the unique significance of slavery and emancipation in the history of the region, interpreted within the frame of post-colonial politics. (Higman 1998:103)

It is interesting, Higman says, that historians have increasingly come to concern themselves with the experience of slavery, but that public interest is in fact still focused on the abolition of slavery and the “new” resistance heroes who fought for it. Thus we find emerging a new yet partly familiar discourse that present-day political leaders in the Caribbean like to appropriate, especially on Emancipation Day. At the same time, this discourse fits in with the feelings of uncertainty many Afro-Caribbean people have about what liberty in fact means today (Higman 2001:103). For Afro-Surinamese, the uncertainty is intensified by their rivalry with the Asian population groups, who arrived in the country after slavery, but who have now surpassed them, at least from a socioeconomic point of view (Hassankhan *et al.* 1995:273).

CONCLUSION

Emancipation Day in Suriname has been used, in collaboration with the Church, to discipline and control the formerly enslaved and their descendants, creating what I call a “cult of gratitude” to God and king, as well as an ideology “didacticism” by which Emancipation Day was used to underline the mental slavery people still had to free themselves from. The com-

60. In 1996 the U.S. black Muslim leader, Louis Farrakhan, was invited to give a lecture in Suriname (Melker 2001:160). The Surinamese economist and former government minister, Armand Zunder, has announced on several occasions, such as in July 2004 at the well-known Afro-Surinamese Kwaku Festival in Amsterdam, the publication of a book in which he estimates the amount earned by the Netherlands from Surinamese slavery to be around 100,000 million euros.

61. On the website of *De Ware Tijd*, October 22, 2003.

memoration of July 1 thus was used to strengthen the colonial status quo. It was turned into a *lieu de mémoire* to forget the slavery past and for the Afro-Surinamese to "become civilized." And thus, it almost became a *lieu d'amnésie*.

Since the resuscitation of the slavery past, Emancipation Day has always been contested as a historical "site." There are those who want to remember, and those who want to forget, though both have in mind the future. Those who want to forget want to secure the future by keeping the present as it is. Those who want to remember want to change the present to make a better future.

Therefore, the idea of a mental slavery was not used by those who contested the colonial July 1 discourse to accept their subordinate position in colonial society, but to develop into a self-conscious "nation." The African diaspora proved to be an inspirational and probably crucial context for stimulating the refusal of subordination. As a result, Emancipation Day gradually secularized, though never completely. Almost parallel to its secularization, it underwent a process of folklorization. It allowed the state to pacify distinct and/or subaltern claims by making it a national day for all Surinamese. However, the state has not been able to overcome interethnic rivalry, and in fact, it is at this very level that rivalries are played out. The government has failed to transform Emancipation Day into a genuine national realm of memory. Instead, July 1 is being reclaimed by a politically influential avant garde as an exclusively Afro-Surinamese *lieu de mémoire* supported by a growing orientation toward developments elsewhere in the African diaspora, particularly in the United States and in the Netherlands. As a result, July 1 seems more alive than ever as a platform for Afro-Surinamese emancipation.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Consuming the Caribbean: From Arawaks to Zombies. MIMI SELLER. New York: Routledge, 2003. ix + 252 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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When Sir Hans Sloane (1660-1757) first visited Jamaica in 1687, he witnessed women feeding sick children a mixture of milk, sugar, and cocoa. Sensing opportunity, he brought the recipe back to England and began marketing "Sir Hans Milk Chocolate" for medicinal uses. Aside from his entrepreneurial interests, Sloane began a program of collecting, transporting, cataloguing, and studying plants from the Caribbean, many of which ended up in the Chelsea Physic Garden, an institution from which emerged such innovations as double-glazed glass windows for greenhouses, cultivated teas exported to plantations on the Indian Subcontinent, and cultivated rubber trees, sent to Malaysia. Sloane's chocolate became big business; the recipe was bought by Cadbury's. It is easy to read Sloane's story as a familiar tale of the intertwining of science, the market, and colonial extraction. It is more challenging, and more important, to ask how the intellectual project, the system of knowledge/power Sloane represents, is replicated by contemporary Caribbeanist scholarship and its forms of knowledge. The author of this stunning book poses this latter question and, in the process, calls upon contemporary Caribbeanists to consider the ethics and politics of the way Caribbean studies as a field has helped to constitute the objects of its investigations.

At the most general level, this book is about the "'invention' of the idea of the Caribbean in Euro-American culture" (p. 8). Seller takes the reader through the familiar ground of the Caribbean's simultaneous incorporation in and exclusion from modern intellectual discourses. Often proclaimed to be the first site of modernity, the origin of Europe's wealth and rise to world dominance, the proving ground of capitalist forms of production and work discipline, the laboratory for modern ideologies of race, the Caribbean just as quickly fades from view, not exotic enough to occupy anthropology, not dis-

tant enough to be considered part of the world outside the West, not important enough to remain in the center-stage of the grand theories of modernity, capitalism, postmodernity, and colonialism.

More specifically, the book tracks the forms of mobility and immobility, the “economies of movement, touch, and taste” (p. 4) that create “the Caribbean” as an object of inquiry, desire, and despair. Sheller proposes to put consumption at the center of the study of the Caribbean, and insists on seeing the Caribbean as “an effect, a fantasy, a set of practices, and a context ... [that] defies separation into the real versus the imagined” (p. 5). She is interested in “what something called the Caribbean has come *to mean* and *to do* for people from Western Europe and North America” (p. 8).

The book is not a simple exercise in reflexivity or denunciatory critique. Sheller is not interested in lumping Caribbean studies together with colonial science, nineteenth-century travel writing, and twentieth-century export agriculture and tourism for rhetorical effect to argue against the very possibility of knowledge about “others.” Rather, borrowing a page from Caribbean history – the ethical consumption movement of the abolitionists who boycotted slave-grown sugar – Sheller attempts to outline a new kind of ethical consumption for those who live in worlds made and re-made by the postslavery Atlantic.

The method of the book is different, too. Rather than lining up the good, the bad, and the ugly in the history of the world’s engagement with and construction of the Caribbean, Sheller traces out the dense networks of “human, floral, faunal, capital, visual, and informational movements that constituted (and constitute) the transatlantic world” (p. 21). The book thus has affinities with theoretical developments in science studies; figures like Bruno Latour and Sarah Franklin appear throughout the text. Studying how networked agents, objects, and knowledges create new agents, objects, and knowledges lets Sheller examine what she terms “the binding mobilities of consumption” (p. 15), the past flows that inform, inflect, and direct present ones, as well as the discontinuities, unintended consequences, and misfired desires that led to new possibilities for resistance and change. Everything comes under scrutiny in this form of inquiry – not just slave narratives, for example, and the circuits of affect, literacy, politics, and communities of regard that produced them, but also modern Caribbean literary studies, grounded in the idea of “the slave narrative.” Not just touristic images of tropical isles, but past and present environmental consciousnesses that require and feed a “nature” supposedly unspoiled by human culture. Not just the place of the Caribbean in the global AIDS epidemic and global AIDS discourse, but the place of Caribbean blood plasma and hormones in the transnational pharmaceutical industry (which have eerie precursors in Sloane’s collection of Caribbean people’s skin and body parts).

The book consists of an introduction and six chapters. The introduction lays out the project of the book. Chapters 1 through 3 examine different natu-

ral and material products of the Caribbean and their formation in consumption circuits, knowledge circuits, and natural circuits. Chapter 1 is a broad overview of Caribbean political economy and Euro-American knowledge, beginning with Sloane and ending with offshore finance and luxury gated communities. Chapter 2 looks at nature and landscape through travel narratives and botanical science. Chapter 3 concerns the "classic" Caribbean commodities, from sugar to bananas. Chapters 4 through 6 examine different understandings and formations of the "bodies" of the Caribbean region. Chapter 4 returns to travel narratives, and asks how Euro-Americans have "oriented" themselves to the Caribbean. The play on words is intentional, as Sheller examines how the Caribbean has served to orient discussions of the distinction between east and west, primitive and civilized, as well as how, beginning with Columbus's initial voyages, the Caribbean has been "entangled" (p. 108) with histories and imaginations of Asia as well as Africa. The Caribbean, in Sheller's analysis, makes explicit the instability of the geographical referents of Euro-American orientalism. Sheller also examines histories of the elisions between the Levant and the Caribbean in colonial discourse. Chapter 5 takes up the problem of cannibalism, and the literal and figurative ways that Europe and North America have eaten up the Caribbean. Here, Sheller not only takes the reader through the literary canon, beginning with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, but also through the drug wars of the 1980s and 1990s, and the enlistment of Caribbean bodies in discourse and practices of disease and pharmacology. Chapter 6 turns to the domains of theory, asking why it has been so easy for cultural theorists to appropriate the metaphor of creolization for contemporary cultural hybridities. "Language, literature, and theory itself are all subject to [the] same processes of mobile but risky consumption" that characterized colonial science, travel writing, slavery, tourism, and agricultural production (pp. 202-3). Sheller concludes the book with a call for "historians and theorists of Western culture" to "begin to recognize [the Caribbean's] centrality in the making of 'our' modernity" (p. 203).

Sheller's book is a remarkable accomplishment. It does not present new findings so much as it helps us stop thinking about the old ones in familiar ways. Erudite, theoretically acute, and, incidentally, richly illustrated with images from primary documents, this book locates the problem of the Caribbean firmly within the problem of the ethics of knowledge. I would quarrel with some of its elisions. Sheller sometimes takes continuity for granted when it should be unpacked or justified. For example, statements like "from reading seventeenth-century descriptions of the first glorious taste of a pineapple, we can slide effortlessly up to contemporary debates about fair trade in tropical produce" (p. 23) rub against the grain of historicist sensibilities; seeing a "clear path" from slavery to the global division of labor (p. 23) begs the question of whether persons, bodies, and work as such can be abstracted from their historical situations to become elements of a uni-

versal theory. The language of networks and paths in the book sometimes tidies concatenations of persons, ideas, and things that might better be seen as tangles or knots. There is also, in general, a lack of attention to the differences between seventeenth-century quasi-feudal or tributary relations and cosmologies and later, more Enlightenment or capitalist ones. Nonetheless, this is an exciting and insightful contribution to Caribbean studies, one that brings much-needed theoretical rigor to new understandings of its objects and its forms of knowledge.

The Root of Roots: Or, How Afro-American Anthropology Got Its Start.
RICHARD PRICE & SALLY PRICE. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press/ University of Chicago Press, 2003. 91 pp. (Paper \$10.00)

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The field is the laboratory of the cultural anthropologist.
(Melville J. Herskovits, *Man and His Works*
1947 [1951]:79)

History is the fruit of power, but power itself is
never so transparent that its analysis becomes superfluous.
The ultimate mark of power may be its invisibility;
the ultimate challenge, the exposition of its roots.
(Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past*, 1995:xix)

This revelatory pamphlet is about the hidden power of ethnological paradigms in the presentation of ethnography. The data are plumbed by the authors from the handwritten diaries of Melville J. Herskovits and Frances Shapiro Herskovits, now deposited in the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. The diary entries are compared with the presentations in the Herskovitses' publications *Rebel Destiny* (1934) and *Suriname Folk-Lore* (1936). The Prices are two ethnographers and historians of Maroon peoples of the same region to which the Herskovitses traveled with their entourage. The work explicates a story told by the Herskovitses about their insights into Saramaka Maroon provenience based on their brief brokered encounters over several weeks during two summers in 1928 and 1929 with the people who

became the African diffused epitome of the Herskovitses' anthropological "root" of what was to become one branch of Afro-American ethnology.

In 1922 Bronislaw Malinowski published his first book about the life of the people of the Trobriand Islands off the coast of New Guinea, underscoring the point that modern ethnography is based on the canon of *understanding the native's point of view*, a key to which is long-time residence with people, field research without brokers, competence in local vernaculars, and native insights into symbols and tropes. This position was appropriated by the writings of the Herskovits team, but not applied in their own research with Saramaka, or other, people.

By 1929, when the Herskovitses made their second venture into the rain-forest of Suriname to "mine" the rich African data of the Saramaka Maroon people, Malinowski had published four more books to ground his widely accepted canon extolled in M. Herskovits's undergraduate text book and in his ethnographies. But the actual activities and methods of the Herskovitses in Paramaribo and Saramaka-land radically contrasted with this position. The Prices' pamphlet documents the contrasts to shed light on problematic historical questions that relate to the history of anthropology in general, and to African diaspora studies in particular.

On the seventh day in Asindoopo, the village of the Saramaka paramount chief, a crisis that ended the Herskovitses' field research is expressed in this diary entry: "because if they're afraid of what we learned, anything is possible; we're watching our food & water" (p. 1). In this second and last trip to Suriname, Frances Herskovits seems to have learned more and more about Saramaka cultural life, working into their language and getting along with women with little difficulty. By contrast, Melville, the expert on Africa from his readings (which included a doctoral dissertation at Columbia University on the cattle complex of East Africa), relies almost entirely on outsiders, mostly white, and seems to have lectured arrogantly to the Saramaka about the African origins of what he observes, and what he imagines, even showing them photographs and drawings of "authentic" African peoples and artifacts.

Frances, taking her husband's expertise as threatening to the people whom she is coming to know, generates a marital dyadic paranoiac drama in which Melville's knowledge of the Saramaka must be a threat to the people who, the Herskovitses are convinced, keep their Africanisms secret. In the midst of public squabbling among the members of the ethnographic entourage and disquiet among some Saramakas due to indiscretions of one of Melville's imported informants from Paramaribo, the Herskovitses flee. Thus ends the Herskovitsian "ethnography" of a Maroon people in the Americas who soon thereafter are epitomized as the "most African" on the "Scale of Intensity of Africanisms" that is to be reproduced in scholarly papers, books, and a textbook on cultural anthropology.

Unlike Malinowski, who raised the question of how people perceive their relations to life and strive to realize the visions of their world as they have come to understand it, Melville J. Herskovits sought hegemonically to reproduce his professional career-oriented diffusionist perspective onto the people. (I am not so sure of Frances S. Herskovits in this.) The Prices write “that he never quite got the Saramaka ethnography right seems in the end not to have mattered much, to him or to anyone else. Go figure” (p. 87).

I have been “figuring” about this paradox of shoddy ethnography as the basis for an entire subfield of highly contested study – Afro-American Anthropology – since I first undertook a systematic reading of Melville Herskovits’s works in 1959. My own radical rejection of hegemonic diffusionism took a turn toward social anthropology, symbolism, ritual, and later native historicity and cultural transformations. Every time I looked “back” at Herskovitsian models I increased my mistrust of the techniques and methods involved in any search for pre-imagined “retentions” and “reinterpretations” – remnants all – that may be manifest in “syncretisms” that configure within “the culture” as some sort of “focus.” The syntagmatic chain of core culture-Africa-secrecy-darkness-jungle (bush)-distance-dangerous-and place of no return may be the stuff of the “Heart of Darkness paradigm” (p. 32) but is lodged within a mindset inimical to understanding cultural systems in time and through time.

R. Price must have experienced some of the same misgivings when he wrote *Saramaka Social Structure* for his doctoral dissertation at Harvard University, completed in 1969 and published in 1974. The fact that he followed this up with the masterful and now classic *First-Time* (1983) after an exhaustive study of Maroon societies in the Americas seems to me to suggest strongly that social structure, cultural dynamics and transformations, and indigenous historicity are complementary facets of the same overall phenomenon of cultural integrity, the understanding of which is the basis for contemporary and historical ethnography. As anthropology gains strength in its sophistication, it may be losing ground in the very political workshop of the academy which Melville J. Herskovits, as one of the banner Boasians, cultivated so well, for so long. This political workshop now houses programs of African American Studies very weakly articulated to contemporary anthropology in many instances.

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The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West, 1450-1800. PAOLO BERNARDINI & NORMAN FIERING (eds.). New York: Berghahn Books, 2001. xv + 567 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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In June 1997, the John Carter Brown Library sponsored an international conference entitled "The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West." This thick volume is the end product of that project, its twenty-five chapters presenting the work of a number of distinguished scholars who contributed to the library's ground-breaking effort to examine the Jewish role in the westward development of Europe and its Atlantic theater before 1800. Among these are such luminaries in the field as Jonathan Israel, Patricia Seed, Gerard Nahon, Anita Novinsky, David Katz, Jonathan Sarna, Seymour Drescher, and Pieter Emmer, accompanied here by a fair number of rising young stars. The book's title effectively captures its axis points, although the order inverts the actual emphasis since the story of the Jews is necessarily subordinated here to the story of the expansion of Europe, as the editors freely admit (pp. xii, 1). Paolo Bernardini's introduction does an admirable job of summing up the content of the chapters, but neither in his introduction nor in Norman Fiering's preface do readers get a coherent argument for how this project broadens previous historiographical perspectives on the Jewish role in the development of the New World. Bernardini claims (p. 1) that this project embarks on a new historiographical thread, but never defines what that is or how other scholars might pick it up and contribute to its development. While the book deserves applause for its breadth of scope and its inclusion of *Christãos Novos*, *Conversos*, and "Marranos" in its discussion of the Jewish experience, the lack of an overall vision for the work will leave most readers wondering about its true intent. Is it Latin American history, European history, or only a very peculiar kind of Jewish history? Where is the expansive vision that will persuade skeptics in the field that the efforts of the contributing scholars constitute more than antiquarian marginalia? It seems that the editors have missed an opportunity here to set the historiographical bar for further research in this area.

One might also anticipate that in a work with such an ambitious reach, close scrutiny would be given to the Caribbean as a key geographic arena in which the nationalist claims of Europeans were so hotly contested in the

wake of the Columbian “discovery.” The reader who approaches this book with that expectation will be disappointed. Coverage of the Jewish role in the development of the Caribbean basin is spotty here: only five articles (one-fifth of the book) pay direct attention to Caribbean colonies – those by John Garrigus on St. Domingue, Wim Klooster on Suriname and Curaçao, and Rachel Frankel on Suriname are the strongest of these. Overall, the Dutch and French colonies in the New World are heavily covered, and Brazil receives an appropriate share of attention; but both the Spanish Main, from Nicaragua to Colombia, and the British islands are mentioned only in passing. Given the relatively large size and economic importance of Jewish communities on Jamaica and Barbados during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, not to mention their significant link to the Mosquito coast and intercolonial trade on the Main, their absence here is indeed glaring. The geographical mismatch is typical of the book’s overall topical imbalance: Mexico, Brazil, and Hispanic South America receive the lion’s share of their coverage here in seven articles covering aspects of *Converso* identity and the Inquisition, while the role of Jews and *Conversos* in the economic development of these areas is neglected. The section on international trade suffers from similar problems, where four articles discuss only the Jewish involvement in the sugar and slave trades, which were dominated by the Dutch and the Portuguese. (Two articles that generally discuss Jews in French Atlantic trade are relegated to a separate section.) Other important trade commodities with which Jewish merchants were heavily involved – including indigo and other dyestuffs, logwood, spices, cocoa, textiles, and Portuguese wines – are sadly neglected.

One simply could not describe this book as comprehensive in its coverage of the pertinent topics. There are important lacunae, subjects left entirely vacant for future exploration. Nevertheless, due to the emphasis on European expansion through the process of conquest and colonization of the New World, much of the analytical substance of the individual chapters does provide useful background for detailed study of the history and development of the Caribbean. This is, in short, a book aimed at the accomplished scholar rather than the general reader. As such, its strengths lie in the questions it poses and the historiographic weaknesses it identifies (if only by their absence), rather than in the wealth of material it presents. Indeed, the idea of transatlantic study of the Jewish experience is only just beginning its emergence from the shadows of European Jewish history and has yet to make serious inroads into either Latin American history or American Jewish history. It is in this sense that *The Jews and the Expansion of Europe to the West* makes its deepest contribution. While the book lacks application for classroom use, as the first serious effort to bring European Jewish history into the New World it constitutes an effective spur to further scholarship that includes the study of Jews within the purview of the burgeoning field of transatlantic studies.

The Mighty Experiment: Free Labor versus Slavery in British Emancipation.
SEYMOUR DRESCHER. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002. 307 pp.
(Cloth US\$ 50.00)

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In a review essay of four books on slavery and antislavery published in this journal two years ago, I commented that the cover art showing images of African freedom used by three of them (including Drescher's *From Slavery to Freedom*) seemed a little incongruous in that the lives and struggles of the enslaved and the freed were hardly center-stage in their pages. The same lack of fit between cover art and content can be seen in the present work: a striking contemporary painting of an African-Caribbean family celebrating its liberation graces a study of metropolitan debates about free and slave labor in which the people of the nineteenth-century Caribbean are absent.

Seymour Drescher, one of the most prolific and wide-ranging historians of antislavery in the Atlantic world, takes as his subject in *The Mighty Experiment* "the intrusion of social sciences into the politics of slavery," the appeals to the authority of the new disciplines of economics, demography, and anthropology, by those involved in advocacy and policy-making on slavery in the British Empire. A study of an important aspect of British intellectual and political history in the nineteenth century, this book is an erudite and original analysis of the antislavery debates (in the press, in Parliament, in academia) especially between the 1820s and the 1850s, and their relation to the newly fashionable social sciences. British emancipation came to be seen, Drescher states, as "an unprecedented experiment in human development ... the supreme test of controlled social change," both to test modern social scientific theory, and to provide a model to the world of successful liberation of slaves.

Economics was the first of the sciences to be drawn into the debates, with Adam Smith's famous (if cautiously worded) assertion: "The experience of all ages and nations, I believe, demonstrates that the work done by slaves, though it appears to cost only their maintenance, is in the end the dearest of any." Free labor ideology, appealing to the authority of Smith, was certainly central to British antislavery; yet in the early nineteenth century few economists followed the master in asserting the universal superiority of free over coerced labor, and after emancipation, especially after the crises of 1846-48, even the abolitionists largely abandoned it. Demography and the authority of

Malthus played an important role in the antislavery debate, particularly in the 1820s, when the inexorable decline of the slave populations of the Caribbean sugar colonies (except Barbados) furnished the most striking argument for emancipation. And the "science of man" – anthropology, as it came to be called – was also drawn into the slavery discourse. Theories of racial hierarchy, of innate inferiority of Africans, played little role in the public British discourse on slavery and emancipation between the 1780s and 1830s (in contrast to the United States). It was after 1838, and especially after about 1848, that the "science of race" rapidly gained ground as an explanatory device for the "failure" of British Caribbean emancipation, as British anthropology moved to more strident assertions of racial hierarchy and genetic inferiority.

Drescher's second key theme, closely interrelated with the first (the salience of the new social sciences in the discourse on slavery and freedom), is the way in which British emancipation was conceptualized and shaped by the notion of experiment: emancipation as an experimental science, to borrow one of his chapter titles. Sierra Leone and Haiti, attempts to give slaves wages in Barbados, the importation of Chinese laborers and American ex-slave soldiers in Trinidad before 1834 – all were scrutinized by both sides in the antislavery debate to see what empirical data could be "scientifically" retrieved and utilized. And the Parliamentary and press debates that preceded the passage of the Emancipation Act in 1833, brilliantly analyzed in Chapter 8, swirled around the central trope of a "mighty experiment" in human affairs. The triumphant years between 1833 and 1840, with apprenticeship ended ahead of schedule, and reports pouring in of the material and "moral" improvement of the Caribbean ex-slaves, created high hopes for the "expansion" of the experiment all over the Atlantic world, symbolized by the World Antislavery Convention in London (1840).

From then on, it was all downhill for British antislavery; Drescher's Chapters 10, 11, and 12 show how the "mighty experiment" was "eroded," "in crisis," and "abandoned." From the point of view of economics, the experiment had failed: sugar could not be more profitably produced by free wage labor in the tropics than by slaves (Barbados alone excepted because of its "superabundant" population). If Mauritius, Trinidad, and British Guiana were doing reasonably well by the 1860s it was due to indentured Indian labor, which the abolitionists had been forced to accept, climbing down from their strong disapproval in the 1840s. Gradually the Caribbean colonies and the great experiment itself faded into relative insignificance in British political and social scientific discourse. By 1884, the jubilee of emancipation was celebrated in Britain as a noble act of humanity; the moral dimension took precedence over its economic results or its utility for testing theories about free labor superiority. The great experiment had virtually no impact on British imperial policy in the 1880s and 1890s, and the economists lost interest in slavery and emancipation.

This erudite, well-written, and always interesting book should enhance Drescher's reputation as a leading authority on Western antislavery discourses in the nineteenth century.

Jamaica in Slavery and Freedom: History, Heritage and Culture. KATHLEEN E. A. MONTEITH & GLEN RICHARDS (eds.). Kingston: University of the West Indies Press, 2002. xx + 391 pp. (Paper US\$ 35.00)

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This collection of essays, written primarily by historians at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, is dedicated to three pioneering figures in the writing of Jamaican and Caribbean history: Clinton Black (1918-93), Elsa Goveia (1925-80), and Douglas Hall (1920-99). The book is well edited, written, and illustrated (though it would have been enhanced by an index). Each chapter is a significant contribution to the understanding of Jamaica in slavery and freedom, and together the essays provide a rich focus on various aspects of Jamaican history before and after emancipation. However, the inclusion of "heritage and culture" in the subtitle begs the question of an anthropological perspective, which at times is noticeably missing.

In a useful introduction summarizing the eighteen essays, the editors argue that they "point to the importance and relevance of history to everyday life, indicating its explanatory and interdisciplinary roles, and to history's relationship to questions of national identity, culture, and political, economic and societal developments" (p. xv). These are excellent perspectives, but a fuller focus on the continuous social and cultural processes linking the past and the present would have counter-balanced the constraints of historical periodization to enable a more effective integration of history, heritage, and culture.

The first three essays constitute Part I, "Sources and Historiography." Joan Vacianna, of the Mona Library, highlights both the richness and under-use of primary sources in the library for studying Jamaican and Caribbean history from the mid-seventeenth century to the twentieth. Drawing on some of these sources in Chapter 2 and discussing the role of "stories" in constructing "histories," James Robertson explores the construction of Anglo-Jamaican identity by the early postconquest settlers who portrayed Jamaica,

in the late seventeenth century before sugar plantations and slavery took hold, as an empty land available for English land grants. In Chapter 3, "Early Post-Emancipation Jamaica: The Historiography of Plantation Culture, 1834-1865," Carl Campbell addresses some trends and debates (particularly regarding the organization of agriculture) in the growing historiography of the postslavery British West Indies, especially Jamaica.

Part II, "Society, Culture and Heritage," contains six chapters. Trevor Burnard, studying the period 1655-1780, points (in a comparative discussion) to high mortality rates as the explanation for the failure of the white population to establish a settler society in Jamaica. There are also rich chapters by Maureen Warner-Lewis (of the Department of Literatures in English) on African cultural continuities in contemporary Jamaica; Anthony Harriott on the persistence of *obya* to the present; Brian Moore and Michele Johnson on Christmas celebrations, including Christmas markets (1865-1920); Elizabeth Pigou-Dennis on the "language" of the Jamaican bungalow in the early twentieth century; and Sharon Chako on the politics of museum representation of the Taino marking the Columbian quincentenary.

Equally enriching of under-researched areas of Jamaican history are the nine chapters in Part III, "Economy, Labour and Politics." Trevor Burnard contributes again, now focusing on urbanization by examining the economic role of Kingston in the mid-eighteenth century. Veront Satchell highlights the co-existence of slave labor with technological advancements in the sugar industry (1809-30). Kathleen Monteith and Lorna Simmonds illuminate the significance of coffee plantations (Monteith) and the Afro-Jamaican urban marketing system (Simmonds) during slavery; while Barry Higman examines responses to emancipation at Friendship and Greenwich sugar plantations in Westmoreland. Swithin Wilmott reveals the political role of free and freed blacks (1831-65), and Marleen Bartley assesses the reasons for the failure of "the colonial government's land settlement policy" (1923-49) to generate "real agricultural development of land" (p. 337). The concluding chapters by Glen Richards and Anthony Bogues (formerly in Mona's Department of Government) explore the role of race and class: Richards in relation to labor politics (1900-34), and Bogues with reference to nationalism and political thought.

Among the essays that particularly interested me as an anthropologist were those on Afro-Jamaican marketing by Moore and Johnson and by Simmonds, and on plantations and peasantization by Campbell and Higman. However, these chapters also begged questions regarding the links between history, heritage, and culture. There are several points of continuity and transformation that could have been explored between the internal marketing system in the historical periods studied and Jamaican markets today, such as the "Bend Down" and Christmas markets of Falmouth near the former slaving port and postslavery free village of Martha Brae in Trelawny Parish (Besson 2002,

2003). Likewise, Professors Campbell and Higman could have addressed assessments of Douglas Hall's reconsideration of the flight from the estates informed by the historical anthropology of Trelawny's free villages, which evolved both in the plantation heartlands and at the vanguard of the exodus (Besson 1992, 2002; Smith 1995). Such assessments highlight the significance of access to land in the peasantization process both before and after emancipation, synthesizing the debate. Campbell's portrayal of my theoretical perspectives on free villages and peasantry is also inadequate (he considers one 1988 article). Wider coverage would have answered his interesting query regarding the processes involved in the Caribbean culture-building of family land from slavery to the present.

The most effective chapters showing the "relevance of history to everyday life" (p. xv) include those by Warner-Lewis, Harriott, and Bogues. However, Harriott's dichotomization of *obya* and *myal* could be modified in light of recent work (e.g., Handler & Bilby 2001; Besson 2002). Likewise, in calling for "a reperiodization of Jamaica's official history" (p. 384) – at present a twentieth-century brown creole nationalist narrative – to include a black nationalism originating in the nineteenth century, Bogues could have further set aside constraining periodization; for Jamaica's gendered black nationalism is rooted in the Ethiopianism and *obeah-myal* ideology of the eighteenth century (Besson 1995, 2002).

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Martha Brae's Two Histories: European Expansion and Caribbean Culture-Building in Jamaica. JEAN BESSON. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002. xxxi + 393 pp. (Cloth US\$ 60.00, Paper US\$ 24.95)

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Over the span of her thirty-year career Jean Besson has proposed that Afro-Jamaicans and, to a lesser extent, Afro-Caribbeans were culture-builders within the plantation and continued to build upon these cultures when the plantation was ruined. Her new book further elaborates this proposition. Drawing directly from twelve of her thirty-seven essays concerned with culture building, written between 1979 and 2002, it examines at length the creole culture of the residents of Martha Brae in Trelawny, Jamaica, paying special attention to customary or family land tenure and the familial relations that derive therefrom.

Besson argues that the development and decline of Martha Brae as an Afro-Creole town is attributable to its development and decline as an agricultural adjunct to the plantation. The book's first chapter describes the plantation via planter's histories. It goes on to describe the plantation's decline and the resultant consolidation of lands under customary land tenure, which differs from European unilineal descent laws and their Caribbean derivatives. For Besson, this consolidation represents not only a reaction to the plantation's decline, one among many that she cites, but also the outgrowth of a seminal form of creole resistance, beside which all other forms pale, emanating from the ex-slaves to their descendants. Because planters withheld land during slavery, after emancipation peasants sought to acquire it, often under the auspices of churches and philanthropists, and these acquisitions became the basis for customary land tenure.

The establishment of customary land was critical to the agenda of the ex-slaves in such free villages as Martha Brae. Today it not only survives in name, but constitutes the very basis for contemporary village life, a conclusion at which Besson arrives after examining the transformation of Trelawny land-use patterns, precipitated in part by the rise of the tourist industry and the resultant influx of landless workers. She maintains that, despite these changes and the polarization of Martha Brae's inhabitants into those who were *born ya* ("born here") and those who are new-comers, Trelawny's free village stands fast, and any variation in land-tenure patterns represents a

continuity with the range of strategies used by protopeasants, Maroons, and emancipated slaves to acquire land (p. 137).

Besson relies on the oral histories of various Martha Brae families. Through them emerges an image of individuals hemmed in by plantations and, later, estate monopolies, driven to devise strategies to acquire land which all but bypass the notice of the state and of the nation's elite. That elderly citizens recall their family ties through the recollection of the places and of the properties which situated them may be understood as further evidence of the importance of land in the lives of the peasantry – as Besson suggests, a tradition. But these oral histories also suggest a fair amount of migration, family mobility, land sale, and land loss. Moreover, differentiation in terms of land ownership, religion, and transnational kin suggests that several creole frontiers, combining different temporalities in terms of their relation to kin and capital, coexisted. Though traditions persist, over the course of time the contexts in which they persist are changed, and readers might wonder what causes the inhabitants of Martha Brae to retain forms which elsewhere have been altered. They might likewise wonder whether a tradition retains its meaning within a community, or village, as Besson points out, increasingly tied to commodity agencies for marketing, through external price determination, the physical transport of their produce and the introduction of a technical package of agro-chemical inputs – even for peasants in relatively isolated places like the Maroon community of Accompong, at the edge of Cockpit country (Barker & Spence 1988: esp. p. 205).

No community is static, of course. That Besson must momentarily address Martha Brae as such in the interests of accentuating the continuity and unity of creole resistance may be forgiven considering the interesting insights she offers her readers – foremost among them, that family land tenure was a symbolic practice through which these individuals realized freedom. Let readers not forget the many forms of freedom and the many means to the realization of those forms. The so-called protopeasant also embodied the wage laborer, the tenant, the independent worker, the migrant worker, and a host of others, in a complicated political economy of land ownership.

Michel-Rolph Trouillot reminds his readers that *the* plantation, as such, never existed historically, not even in the Americas of slavery. Rather, thousands of plantations tried to conform to the ideal type, but always within the limitations imposed by specific circumstances, thus leading perhaps to different social relationships and creole traditions (Trouillot 2002:201). Besson's readers might do well to apply Trouillot's caution likewise to the idea of Europe, the single entity that may be convenient to imagine as the origin of all planters. Having done so, Besson's readers are bound, as I am, to thank her for the scrupulous scholarship and the fine detail she brings to the subject of land-based working people in the Caribbean.

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Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition: Puerto Rico, West Africa, and the Non-Hispanic Caribbean, 1815-1859. JOSEPH C. DORSEY. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003. xvii + 311 pp. (Cloth US\$ 59.95)

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At several points in his study of the slave traffic to Puerto Rico, Joseph Dorsey notes the difficulty in researching the topic. Given that the Spanish government signed several treaties with Great Britain to police and suppress the trade, most of it was carried out clandestinely, resulting in a paucity of direct evidence. As Dorsey says in the introduction, "due to gaps in documents that point both to proslave trade policy and the inner spheres of slave acquisition, our understanding of Puerto Rican slave commerce is sketchy at best" (p. 12). Nonetheless, Dorsey mines documents from Puerto Rican, Cuban, Spanish, and British archives to reconstruct the networks and interests of the Puerto Rican slave trade in the early to mid-nineteenth century, when the island experienced a significant expansion of plantation agriculture. Moreover, he brings to this history a truly Atlantic-world focus, discussing trends and events not only in the Caribbean, but in Europe and Africa as well.

Like Cuba, Puerto Rico remained a Spanish colony until the end of the nineteenth century. One of the factors that perpetuated the colonial bond was the growth of sugar and slavery in both islands. Though Puerto Rico never approached the scale of the Cuban slave trade or sugar production, it did undergo its most dramatic social and economic transformations since the Spanish conquest. Plantations sprouted around the coast of the island and the trade brought significant numbers of African slaves. Not satisfied by the

volume or reliability of the slave traffic, Puerto Rican planters and government officials also devised strategies for coercing the free peasantry onto the plantation, chiefly through the *libreta* system introduced in 1849.

Puerto Rican planters were thus hungry for unfree labor. As Dorsey demonstrates in careful detail, they went to great lengths to secure it through the slave trade. Spain signed several treaties in this period (in 1817, 1835, and 1845) that were designed to diminish, if not ban, the slave trade altogether. Therefore, to circumvent the agreements with Great Britain, Puerto Rican slave buyers, often working with Cuban traders, used a number of subterfuges, including re-exporting slaves from the Danish colony of St. Thomas or buying slaves from ships that flew the flags of countries unencumbered by agreements with Great Britain, such as the Dutch.

Dorsey puts his study in a dense, multi-layered Atlantic-world context. He is sensitive to the dynamics of Caribbean commerce and politics, to the clash of empires, and to changing patterns of trade along the west coast of Africa. Historians have long noted that Puerto Rican planters found it difficult to compete with their better-capitalized Cuban counterparts when it came to purchasing slaves. Yet Dorsey takes our understanding of the slave traffic's rhythms to a new level by inscribing them in the complex political and economic networks that joined the Caribbean to Africa and Europe. *Slave Traffic in the Age of Abolition* thus joins works by Arturo Morales Carrión (1978) and Francisco Scarano (1984) as necessary reading on the rise, decline, and destruction of Puerto Rican slavery.

While this is an admirable work, I do have two criticisms, one general, the other in reference to my knowledge of colonialism in the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. First, Dorsey's prose is frequently overly complicated. For example, in describing and explaining Spain's stratagems for circumventing the various treaties with Great Britain, he writes, "the aim, in effect, was the construction of practices guided by a policy of metaphysical deconstruction, the inscription of nonclosure, the creation of fixed and flexible openings in a newly formed cul-de-sac" (p. 66). This mish-mash of jargon does nothing to illuminate his argument; on the contrary, it threatens to obscure it.

Second, regarding Dorsey's treatment of the retrenchment of Spanish rule in Puerto Rico during this period, I found some of his conclusions to be out of touch with recent scholarship. In writing about relations between colony and metropolis, Dorsey observes, "Spanish liberals began to undermine the authority of high officials sent to the colonies. By the close of the 1830s, metropolitan forces had eroded much of the hegemony associated with captains general, governors, and intendants" (p. 78). In contrast, Josep M. Fradera (1999) has argued that the Captain General's office took on increasing power over the course of the century. Cuba was the focal point of the reduced colonial system, and this was reflected by the prominence of the Captain General, a position held by several of liberal Spain's most powerful political/military

figures including Leopoldo O'Donnell, Francisco Serrano y Domínguez, and Arsenio Martínez-Campos. Puerto Rico and the Philippines also hosted major powerbrokers, such as Juan Prim y Prats and Valeriano Weyler.

These comments are not meant to detract from a work of sophisticated and careful scholarship. Shedding light on an important aspect of Puerto Rican and Caribbean history, Dorsey has also made a dynamic contribution to our knowledge of the rise and fall of African slavery in the Atlantic world.

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A Guide to Sources for the History of the Danish West Indies (U.S. Virgin Islands), 1671-1917. ERIK GØBEL. Denmark: University Press of Southern Denmark, 2002. 350 pp. (Cloth DKK 350.00)

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In 1999, the governments of the U.S. Virgin Islands (the erstwhile Danish West Indies – St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas) and Denmark signed an agreement that would establish the means whereby they might initiate the sharing of access to their common history by creating a guide to mutually-generated archival materials, by cataloguing and repacking materials in the West Indies Archive, by providing internet accessibility to these materials, and, finally, by setting up an archival commission of the interested parties to oversee the process.

The Danes held the Danish West Indies as a colony from 1671 until 1917. During that time, records were generated by the Central Administration in Denmark, which held jurisdiction over the colonies, as well as by the govern-

ment and its functionaries in the islands themselves. The collected documentation of the former has come to be known as the West Indian Archives, while the latter is termed the West Indian Local Archives. The work under review concerns itself with the West Indian Archives; a projected second guide for the Local Archives will be undertaken at a later date.

The first step in the intergovernment plan was the creation of a comprehensive guide to the documents of the West Indies Archive in the Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet). The selection of senior archivist and noted historian Erik Gøbel for that task was a wise one. Both his professional expertise in the National Archives and his considerable erudition in Danish West Indian history, amply demonstrated over the past twenty-five years in scholarly publications, have endowed him with a knowledge of the colonial period and its documentation that is matched by few scholars anywhere. After two years of dedicated labor, the *Guide* appeared in 2002, considerably sooner than some observers thought possible.

The *Guide* is presented in four parts. Part One ("Literature," pp. 15-43) is a concise historiographical essay that begins with a selection of the general works, bibliographies, and published guides about the history of the period (1671-1917). It next offers a thematically organized review of more specific scholarly literature in both Danish and English on topics scattered across such domains as religion, education, sugar, slavery, architecture, military affairs, language, and so forth. I risk egregious understatement when I say that this introduction is helpful in orienting readers to the matters treated in detail in subsequent parts of the *Guide*.

Part Two ("Archival Sources," pp. 45-158) contains eighteen chapters, each one dedicated to a group of archival holdings. A listing of the chapter titles gives a clear idea of the extent of the West Indian archival materials under study and the thoroughness of Gøbel's work: The Central Government, The West Indian Local Archives, The Government, Ecclesiastical and Educational Affairs, The Legal System, The Military Administration, Finance, Trade and Industry, Accounting and Auditing, Statistics, Social Conditions and Public Health, Foreign Affairs, Private Individuals, Private Institutions, Manuscript Collections, The Seals Collection, Maps and Drawings Collection, Danica, and Archival Sources in Denmark outside the Danish National Archives.

Each of these eighteen chapters is in turn divided into sections in which the classes of archival holdings for that chapter are adumbrated and analyzed. For example, a typical chapter has the following sections: an "Introduction," which presents an overview of that archive; "The West Indies," which describes the records of the particular institutions that generated them; "General Remarks," which characterizes the nature of the colonial activities which that particular set of archives treats; "Archives," which gives a brief account of the archives themselves, their history, their content and their condition; "Finding Aids," which renders a few bibliographic citations of any

works specifically related to that archive; and "Literature," which cites the materials relative to that set of archives, with complete bibliographic information. This modular approach provides users with the tools and information necessary to reduce a mountain of archival materials (approximately 1,500 linear meters) to manageable proportions.

Part Three bears the title "Catalogs" and comprises Chapters 22 through 25 (pp. 159-331) of the *Guide*. Each of these four catalogues contains lists of references to boxes, bundles, and volumes of West Indian documents in the National Archives. They cover the materials generated by the four principal institutions of the central government that administered the Danish West Indian colonies successively from 1671 until 1917. These were the West India and Guinea Company (1671-1754), the Chamber of Revenue (1754-60), the Chamber of Customs (1760-1848), and the Central Directorate for the Colonies.

In each chapter, lists of references to archival materials are arranged thematically. For example, the important chapter on the West India and Guinea Company contains subsections on charters, conventions, resolutions, special transactions, correspondence, sugar production and trade, legal actions, and the like. Each document or set of documents under these headings is prefaced by a reference number and a date or range of dates. These are followed in each citation by a brief *précis*, in which have been embedded search elements, such as personal names and technical terms, along with specific dates and occasional cross references.

Finally, Part Four (pp. 333-50) consists of a double-column list of the names of Danish institutions and titles, with facing English translations or equivalents. The suffering English speaker who has ever struggled with rendering the likes of *Generalkirkeinspektionskollegiet* or *Byting* will appreciate this kindly envoi.

In what manner might this new *Guide* most effectively be employed? Anyone able to visit the National Archives in Copenhagen can simply apply by specific reference numbers for any of the catalogued materials in the *Guide* and then use them in the reading room. In addition, the same materials might be ordered and purchased from the growing list of those that have been microfilmed for sale. Finally, web-savvy researchers can search the *Guide* on the internet site that has been set up for just that purpose: <http://www.virgin-islands-history.dk> (in Danish) or <http://www.virgin-islands-history.dk/eng> (in English). As useful as these provisions might be, it is nevertheless to be hoped that microfilm copies of the actual documents will soon be available in libraries in the U.S. Virgin Islands, whose people have so long been deprived of direct access to the materials under discussion here by considerations of distance and linguistic constraints.

The present *Guide* may rightly be considered a fitting beginning for a project that has as its goal allowing two cultures and their respective people

to enjoy equal access to their commonly shared past. With this handsome volume – thanks to the industry and scholarship of Erik Gøbel and his associates – emerges the possibility of placing within the reach of the present generation of students and scholars an impressive portion of the written documentation generated by both the Danish colonial enterprise in the Caribbean from 1671 to 1917 and the variegated response of Caribbean people to that undertaking. As such, it demonstrates that governments can occasionally cooperate on mutually beneficial scholarly projects for the greater good of their respective peoples. With that thought in mind, we anxiously await the appearance of the promised second volume.

Haitian Revolutionary Studies. DAVID PATRICK GEGGUS. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002. xii + 334 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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It is fitting that a collection of David Geggus's essays has been issued in time for Haiti's bicentennial. Geggus has been, for more than two decades, one of the most prominent and prolific contemporary Anglophone historians of the Haitian Revolution. After the publication of his first book, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793-1798*, Geggus has produced a torrent of meticulous, carefully argued scholarship – all of it in the form of some seventy articles in books or journals (plus his editorship of several important scholarly collections). Now, conveniently, a baker's dozen of his essays are collected here, including two pieces never before published. Hidden within the carefully argued pages of this collection, occasionally rising to the surface like a Caribbean reef, is the problem of interpreting this deeply contested and politically charged world history event.

Haitian Revolutionary Studies poses a challenge for the reviewer. A collection of discrete essays, the book does not present an obvious over-arching thesis that is explicitly argued throughout the book. Moreover, while Geggus makes it clear that a great deal is at stake in presenting a factual account of the Haitian Revolution, he is not explicitly self-reflective in defining his own assumptions or interpretation. Thus one must work rather diligently to try to situate *Haitian Revolutionary Studies* within the larger context of historiography on Haiti.

The articles are organized into six sections. The first two sections ("Overview" and "Historiography and Sources") present an introductory survey of the events and secondary and primary sources of the Haitian Revolution. The middle three parts ("Seeds of Revolt," "Slaves and Free Coloreds," and "The Wider Revolution") treat the revolution's origins and participants, and the wider Atlantic responses to it. The epilogue, on the naming of Haiti, examines why the Amerindian term was selected by the largely Europeanized revolutionary elite. Though originally published between 1978 and 1997, most of the essays reprinted in this book have been revised since their original publication to incorporate some of the more recent scholarship, especially in the notes.

But the essays can just as easily be grouped another way: by their tone and scope. While a handful of essays are pointedly argumentative (notably Chapters 5, 6, 8, and 13 on the origins of the 1791 slave revolt, Toussaint Louverture's decision to abandon Spain and throw his forces behind the French republican cause, and the naming of Haiti), the majority of the essays are more temperate in their presentation. These more moderately argued essays are either trained on the Big Picture (Chapters 1, 4, 10, and 11, which give a narrative overview of the revolution, compare it to slave rebellions in world history, examine the Parisian republican responses to the threat of colonial secession and demands for racial equality and the abolition of slavery, and analyze the Spanish and British responses to the revolution) or rather mystifyingly narrow, focused on the fates of individual participants in the revolution. (More on this mystification in a moment.)

In the text of the more pointed essays and buried elsewhere in the notes, Geggus's frequent adversarial position becomes clear. He sharply criticizes those "black nationalist" historical accounts that mythologize the importance of Maroons and vodou in the leadership of the revolt or the influence of the original Taino Indians on the rebels. His method is to carefully scrutinize early surviving documentation of the events to determine which evidence is reliable or the source of spurious interpretations, and to try to pin down exactly what transpired. The outcome is sometimes frustratingly indeterminate ("The scope for speculation [on Toussaint's motives for reneging on the Spanish and allying with the French republicans] is ... still great and will probably remain so ... the man remains ... an enigma" [p. 135]) and sometimes surprisingly banal: a pig was indeed likely sacrificed in anticipation of the insurrection (the "Bois Caïmen ceremony"), but probably a week later than the date that is currently celebrated. Nevertheless, the scope of Geggus's evidentiary database is extraordinary and the method of argumentation formidable. Drawing upon archival and published sources in three languages from more than eight countries, his magisterial command of the material is compelling. This is especially true in two of the most recently composed pieces, "Slave Leaders in Exile" and "The Naming of Haiti."

Yet Geggus's challenges to the interpretations of Jean Fouchard, Jean Price-Mars, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot, among others, seem to overlay a deeper political rift. In his culminating essay, "The Naming of Haiti," Geggus asserts that "racial awareness" did not motivate Toussaint Louverture; rather, he argues, Toussaint wanted to "remove the stigma Europeans attached to blackness by pointing out that race does not determine behavior" (p. 209). Geggus's rejection of race as a determinant of action sheds light on the "mysterious" chapters mentioned above. All focus on nonliterate black combatants – soldiers who fought on behalf of the planter class (Jean Kina and the "Suisses") and others who had fought under the Spanish herald. They all fought, in Geggus's marvelous phrase, "on the wrong side of history" (p. 201); that is, they are not part of the triumphal narrative thread that accounts for emancipation and the foundation of the Haitian state. It may be that Geggus includes these chapters as a way to underscore his contention that race was not the determining factor in historical agency. Thus, though not explicitly advertised, a fundamental unifying theme in Geggus' work would seem to be to break the mythological hold of race-thinking on Haiti's historiography.

The strengths of this book are many: its careful examination of wide-ranging archival and published primary sources, the connections made to the wider Atlantic, its rigorous logical argumentation, and the seasoned knowledge of an expert in the field. At the same time, some readers will be disappointed in Geggus's resistance to fully and self-reflectively engage in the larger problem of interpreting such a profound historical event, the documentary evidence for which was largely composed and archived by the powers that sought to undermine its success.

REFERENCE

GEGGUS, DAVID PATRICK, 1982. *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793-1798*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Rara! Vodou, Power, and Performance in Haiti and Its Diaspora. ELIZABETH MCALISTER. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002. xviii + 259 pp. and CD demo. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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In spite of much reporting by travelers, journalists, and scholars, Haiti continues to be an enigma to the general American public. AIDS, Vodou, zombies, poverty, and political corruption are lavishly associated with this country which celebrated the 200th anniversary of its independence on January 1, 2004. This is why Elizabeth McAlister, like other scholars who care about the Haitian people, goes to great lengths to explain the results of her research in ways designed to lessen the opportunities for misrepresentation. *Rara!* represents an attempt to tie up all the loose ends, and to present Haitian cultural practice as an organic component of the Haitian worldview.

After more than a decade of study in Haiti and its diaspora (Brooklyn, New York), McAlister became intimately associated through kinship (p. 17) with the people and the country. She understands clearly that any cultural manifestation of Haiti must be viewed in terms of power (politics), for Haiti is, more than any other place in the Caribbean, a political entity in every sense of the term. Haiti is about socioeconomic exchange, challenge of the historical status quo, and revolution. Haiti is about liberation from oppression and material limitations. Haiti is about dreams, drums, mysteries, and fantasy. Thus, McAlister links Rara to Vodou, from which it springs, and to the concepts of power and performance – at once public and private, manifest and latent.

“Rara” means “to make merry” in the language of the Yoruba, one of the twenty-one West African ethnic groups, or *nansyon* (nations) as the Haitians call them. In Haiti Vodou practitioners and Rara performers also refer to 101 nations that make up the country’s population. In Rara, Haitians celebrate the spring harvest in the African tradition of holding a cultural festival of thanksgiving to the eternal deity Mawu-Lisa or Olorum, and the ever-present ancestors, the *lwa*, who guide the people’s daily activities and destiny. In this regard, Rara is a multidimensional phenomenon, and pertains to the past, present, and future of a displaced people striving to maintain its integrity in the face of great odds. Historical displacement and diaspora conclude this presentation of the Haitian saga, from Africa to the Caribbean, and on to

Brooklyn, for an understanding of Haiti compels both lineal and dialectical views of its present predicament.

McAlister follows in the footsteps of Jean Price-Mars and Jacques Roumain, the fathers of Haitian ethnology, as well as Haitian Vodou's first generation of scholars (Melville Herskovits, Milo Rigaud, Katherine Dunham, Maya Deren, Lavinia Williams-Yarborough, Jean Jacques Honorat, Louis Maximilien, and Emmanuel C. Paul). She also follows a second generation of exponents of Haiti cultural reality who have researched and written extensively on Vodou, touching on Rara (in various degrees of depth and interest) as an expression of popular culture linked to Mardigras/Carnival, Kombit (communal work parties), and the Bizango or Sanpwel (the secret societies) – Leslie Desmangles, Max Beauvoir, Michel Laguerre, VèVè A. Clark, Dolores Yonker, Gage Averill, Lois Wilcken, Patrick Bellegarde-Smith, and Gerdès Fleurant, to mention just a few. It is from that privileged vantage point that McAlister embarks on her study of Rara. Her merit lies in an ability to devote prodigious energy and scholarly talent to this genre to produce the first monograph on Rara, and to give it a near exhaustive treatment.

McAlister develops the major themes in Rara and presents a wealth of detail on the political, social, economic, sexual, and religious dimensions of this aspect of Haitian popular culture. Prominent in Rara, both in Haiti and in Brooklyn, are the political undercurrents of Haitian life and lore. Rara songs tell the story of politically powerful figures in the history of the country. They tell the story of the common people too, particularly the women who bear the brunt of the gossip in a macho and sexist society. They tell the story and mythology of the *lwa* or the Vodou spiritual entities, ever present in Haitian life and lore. Rara, the most representative aspect of Haitian culture, unlike Mardigras, which is concentrated mostly in the major cities, is primarily a provincial or countryside activity. The Artibonite Valley, the Greater Léogane area, Arcahaie, the Central Plateau, Pétienville and its environs, the Plains District, and Croix-des-Bouquets, are usually considered the main venues of Rara which, for all intents and purposes can be found throughout Haiti's countryside. In this regard, Rara is one of the truly national festivities covering the whole of Haitian society, and it is curious that until now, no one had devoted a full monograph to it. McAlister is to be applauded for doing so in such an eloquent fashion.

In keeping with the political undercurrents of Haitian life, McAlister does an excellent job discussing the French-Creole debate and the Vodou-Christianity dynamics as they pertain to Rara. Rara, like Vodou, faces the ambivalence of the elite class in Haiti. It is only in New York that some members of the literate class have embraced Rara and, so to speak, let their hair down. Rara in New York City has become the conduit for expressing political dissension that most people would not be able to vent in Haiti. During the coup d'état that overthrew Aristide and sent him into exile in the United

States (1991-94), the Rara bands became the *diplomates du béton* (street diplomats) to articulate their support for the first democratically elected Haitian president in the country's nearly two-hundred-year history. Drummers and *sanba*, or raramen song-makers, became heroes by spinning old lyrics into new songs that bemoaned the past, but celebrated the present, and encouraged a new outlook on life through the upcoming revolution. These new heroes, as McAlister calls the raramen of the 1990s, are, of course, the heirs of the *Kilti Libète*, or Freedom Culture generation of the 1970s who made the "new song" the central element of their campaign for social revolution through cultural awareness. The present-day *Rasin*, or "Roots" culture movement proponents, the continuation of the *Bwa Kay Imam* congress (1791) that preceded the Haitian war of independence (1791-1803), and the twentieth-century movements of cultural affirmation like Indigenism and Négritude, emerged as a central dimension of today's Rara in the diaspora.

A deplorable overemphasis on obscenities (Chapter 2) detracts from the work, and could lend to trivialization of Rara as an important aspect of Haitian culture. McAlister's analysis of obscenities indeed establishes the political point of resistance of the masses to the predatory elites, but it is not the only method used to counter sociohistorical oppression. The Haitian masses have devised day-to-day strategies, many quite subtle, to survive their encounters with the entrenched and privileged segment of the society. *Mawonnaj* (marronage) is the term Haitians have used to refer to such strategies which are manifested in a latent form through performance. Where certain behaviors are expected, Rara performers obliged perfunctorily, but given the opportunity to affirm their central concerns in more appropriate and respectable ways, they do so. An example is the support shown by Haitians living and working in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere for Rara societies in Desdunes, located in the Artibonite Valley, and Mirebalais, in the Central Plateau. Haitians working in the United States send considerable sums of money back home to celebrate and stage Rara festivals. A cursory look at the videos of these events brought back to the United States by the serviteurs or Vodou practitioners reveals a different approach. Grounded in the Vodou universe, the Rara songs in this case refer to the Kongo-Petwo Lwa as the foundation of the *lakou*, or Vodou family compound. Here, an intergenerational mix of children, adults, and older people (some of them quite wise) gives an utterly different view of a spring harvest festival offered in honor of the family ancestors. In fact, Rara, Kombit, and secret societies or societies for the protection of the community (in a word Vodou) stand as an eloquent testimony of the people's resilience and resistance, as McAlister demonstrates. To the Vodou practitioner, obscenities are an appendix in Rara, but not a chapter.

Rara, which springs from Vodou, the soul of a country born from the encounter of three cultures, Amerindian, European, and African, remains one

of the most misunderstood aspects of Haitian culture in the American popular mind. The meeting of those cultures in a setting marked by brutality (with the invasion of the island by the Spaniards who exterminated the indigenous population, the Taino-Arawak, and replaced them with captives from Africa) forms the genesis of one of humanity's great tragedies in modern times. Yet, the history of the people who met each other in the New World paradoxically spawned one of the most vibrant artistic traditions of the Americas. In *Rara*, McAlister has succeeded in dispelling some of the mysteries surrounding Vodou and Rara, to present the simple beauty of the Haitian people.

The accompanying CD and its guide (pp. xv-xviii) help readers follow the story and give a taste of the music and context of Rara. This excellent monograph may well herald a new era of extensive research on this important dimension of Haitian culture.

The Dominican People: A Documentary History. ERNESTO SAGÁS & ORLANDO INOA (eds.). Princeton NJ: Marcus Wiener, 2003. xiii + 278 pp. (Paper US\$ 24.95)

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This book fits into the long tradition, in Latin American historiography, of publishing primary sources. It presents in something less than three-hundred pages a wide variety of documents on the history of the Dominican Republic. Starting with excerpts from the writings of the first Spanish colonists, the editors patiently move through (and provide insights into) colonial history, the nineteenth century, the U.S. domination at the beginning of the twentieth century, the notorious Trujillo dictatorship, and the turbulent political period that followed Trujillo's assassination in 1961, including another U.S. intervention in 1965. Although at the end of their overview they present some sources on contemporary politics, the more recent period after the end of the so-called twelve years of Balaguer (1966-78) remains largely out of sight.

The book is aimed at a general public of students and foreigners interested in the Dominican Republic. The didactic purpose of the authors is evident from the explanatory texts that surround the sources. Where many earlier historians were convinced that "the sources speak for themselves," Sagas and

Inoa clearly believe otherwise. Providing the readers with succinct and generally well-written introductions to the sources, they construct a fragmented but coherent historical interpretation of Dominican history.

Almost inevitably, this vision of Dominican history is mainly political and institutional. The editors attempt to present some sources on social and economic history, but that is by definition very difficult in this kind of collection. Adequate political declarations and institutional texts are much easier to find and to select than texts on sugar production, social change, or racial prejudices, which are often long and drawn out. The greater availability of texts concerning modern history has also led to a preponderance of twentieth-century materials. More than half of the book is dedicated to this period.

In order to present a coherent and succinct story, the editors include excerpts from some well-known secondary sources. There is, for example, a long fragment on the fortune of Trujillo written in the 1950s by the then-exiled opposition leader and historian, Juan Bosch, as well as an excerpt from the famous dissertation by Jesus Galindo who was later murdered by Trujillo. The choice to include such materials implicitly demonstrates the limitations of relying on primary sources for periods of dictatorships.

The part of the book devoted to recent contemporary history is somewhat disappointing, perhaps because of the difficulty of making a good selection from a wealth of material without the necessary historical distance. Nonetheless, I believe the editors could have made more of this period which is so relevant for many of the potential users of the book.

It is difficult to judge how useful this collection will be for teaching Dominican history. Many lecturers will be tempted to use only one or two fragments that fit their own needs. For me, the lack of historiographical context would be the deterrent to using this book as a whole. In light of its clearly didactic objective, a good introduction and a bibliography of recent historical work would have been extremely useful, but there is none. A good overview of the recent historiography of the Dominican Republic could have provided a context for readers who want to understand the process of selection by the editors and the significance of the presented sources.

But these are minor quibbles. Anyone who has been involved in this kind of publication knows how much work – selecting, editing, and translating – is involved in its preparation. The editors should be congratulated for producing a well-edited volume that many interested observers of Dominican history will find useful for a long time to come.

Foundations of Despotism: Peasants, the Trujillo Regime, and Modernity in Dominican History. RICHARD LEE TURITS. Stanford CA: Stanford University Press, 2003. x + 384 pp. (Cloth US\$ 65.00)

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It is a common topic of conversation among students of the Dominican Republic that Dominicans of the older generation, particularly in rural areas of the country, remember the tyrannical dictator, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo (1930 to 1961), with a strange mix of fear and reverence. Turits makes the bold move of taking such positive evaluations of Trujillo's rule seriously, rather than dismissing these as false consciousness or a veiled critique of the country's present state by idealizing its past. Through an extraordinarily meticulous and imaginative blend of archival and oral histories, Turits begins to uncover the historical substance beneath present-day idealizations of the *trujillato*. He is careful to note in detail that the dictator's apparatus of terror and – at times, laughably – self-aggrandizing propaganda were main bulwarks of his control. Yet Turits also makes a convincing case that Trujillo's despotism was leavened with a type of rural populism. This centered on land grants and other efforts to support smallholder agriculture and was also sustained by a paternalist ideology of “*respeto*” and the greater security of person and property provided by the extension of central government authority for the first time throughout the countryside.

This book will transform scholarly views of the dictatorship of Trujillo, and perhaps of other dictatorial regimes of Latin America and the Caribbean, which focus on corruption, brutality, and propaganda to the exclusion of quotidian governance. It is at this last level that Turits works, basing his study on thousands of daily intrastate documents, letters written to the state by peasants, and interviews with rural people in locales scattered across the country. Turits also carefully places Trujillo's rural populism in the historical context of growing elite skepticism regarding the latifundium in the first decades of the century, which responded to the spread of the North American-dominated sugar industry and the imposition of U.S. military rule (1916 to 1924). *Foundations of Despotism* is thus history that takes account of both elite and subaltern perspectives and subjectivities. The oral testimony in particular reinforces Turits's grasp of peasant points of view.

Turits is guided in his interpretation of these sources by the principle that no government can endure for decades solely on the basis of fear and lies. More specifically, "Trujillo's ideology of work and the working man could be effective only because it was backed up by concrete policies for promoting peasant agriculture" (p. 212). Beginning in 1934, official measures were taken to distribute uncultivated land to farmers without legal land titles. By 1945, a total of 178,793 hectares had reportedly been given out to 85,554 agriculturalists (p. 96). It was only near the end of his regime, after undercutting his own base of rural support by dispossessing tens of thousands of peasants to build his own sugar empire, that Trujillo began governing with all stick and no carrot.

Turits portrays Trujillo's rural policy as based more on hegemony than free consent. Propelling Turits's account is the tension between the gains in security provided to rural folk by Trujillo and their loss of political and economic autonomy under his rule. On the one hand, physical survival and socioeconomic reproduction as quasi-autonomous agricultural smallholders necessitated acceptance by the land-needy of the state's protection against the land-greedy. On the other hand, this protection came at the price of the rural population's sedentarization and concentration in space as well as their submission to the vigilant gaze of the state. In the process, "the Trujillo regime effectively incorporated and subjected to the national state a peasantry that for hundreds of years had remained largely invisible to it, eluding its control, surveillance, and taxation" (p. 83).

Even though Turits excels at summarizing his aims and findings, I cannot do justice to his complexly textured argument in a short review. Suffice it to note that a broad range of readers will greet this book with interest. *Foundations of Despotism* is a must-read for all serious students of Dominican society, and holds much for scholars of peasant-state relations, land reform, state formation, authoritarianism, and democratization throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. From my point of view as a student of Haitian-Dominican relations, I was particularly impressed by the new light this book sheds on borderland society, as well as by the new information it presents about the conduct of the Trujillo-led massacre and expulsion of Haitians and Haitian-Dominicans of 1937.

The clarity with which Turits pulls the disparate pieces of his study together brings some unanswered questions to the fore. (That much is to be expected of a work of such great reach.) I remain uncertain how much of the land distribution was successful in the long run: Were the beneficiaries given enough good land, with sufficient water, road access, and other infrastructural support to sustain its use for decades? Geographical heterogeneity is mentioned but insufficiently analyzed: Did support for Trujillo vary regionally? I would like to know more about the author's research methods: How did he conduct his oral history interviews? How did he stitch together written

and oral sources? From my (anthropologist's) standpoint, the book is insufficiently theorized. The book is *not* theoretically devoid: Antonio Gramsci and James Scott clearly stand out as main interpretive influences. Yet devoting more attention to its theoretical approaches would have further enhanced the book's appeal to nonhistorians. (I suspect many historians would disagree with me, and I myself consider this less a flaw than a missed opportunity to underscore the study's wider importance.) It is more certain that the book would have been significantly improved by the addition of a final chapter rounding out Turits's conclusions and drawing comparisons between the *trujillato* and other authoritarian and populist regimes of mid-twentieth-century Latin America and the Caribbean.

These misgivings aside, *Foundations of Despotism* masterfully gives insight into why Trujillo continues to be an object of fascination, so many years after his death. This book is worthy of being read in contrastive counterpoint with another recent great book inspired by the *trujillato*, Mario Vargas Llosa's *La fiesta del chivo*. On very different scales, in totally different styles, and regarding distinct peasant and urban elite segments of the Dominican population, both bring us closer to the lived reality of "the Era."

Almoína, Galíndez y otros crímenes de Trujillo en el extranjero. BERNARDO VEGA. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 2001. 147 pp. (Paper US\$ 25.00)

Diario de una misión en Washington. BERNARDO VEGA. Santo Domingo: Fundación Cultural Dominicana, 2002. 526 pp. (Paper US\$ 65.00)

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In one "Peanuts" cartoon, Snoopy peers over the shoulder of a typewriting Woodstock, and says "Writing a book, I see ... Probably hopes it will be a best-seller ... They all do ... What's the title? ... *I Was Secretary for the Head Beagle*." In 1950, another aspiring writer published a book entitled *Yo fui secretario de Trujillo*. The subject was a "head beagle" of a malevolent kind, the dictator Rafael Trujillo, who came to power in the Dominican Republic in 1930. *I Was Secretary for Trujillo* was a laudatory account of

"The Benefactor's" government. Although the author, José Almoína Mateos, received a much needed payment from his former boss for writing the book, it failed to become a best-seller.

Almoína's previous venture in publishing an account of the Trujillo regime, *Una satrapía en el Caribe*, had appeared in Guatemala the previous year. That pseudonymous book was a scathing revelation of the brutal domestic repression and reckless foreign policy that characterized the *trujillato*, including assassination plots against rivals abroad, based on Almoína's inside information. Copies of *A Satrap in the Caribbean* were quickly purchased wherever they went on sale, not by the reading public, but by Trujillo's foreign agents, who diligently suppressed unfavorable press about "El Jefe." These agents also hunted down and murdered critics of the regime such as Almoína, who paid a heavy price for publishing his negative depiction of Trujillo. He was gunned down at Trujillo's orders while living in exile in Mexico in 1960.

Bernardo Vega has written a book about this episode and assorted other "foreign crimes of Trujillo." The most famous among them is the other case specified in the title, that of Jesús de Galíndez, who was kidnapped off the streets of New York City and executed in the Dominican Republic in 1956. His sin had been to write a dissertation on Trujillo's authoritarian exercise of power, which was due to be published when Galíndez disappeared. An American pilot named Gerald Murphy, who flew Galíndez to his horrible death, also lost his life to the Trujillo tyranny when he talked too much about his participation. The Galíndez-Murphy murders led to a U.S. Congressional investigation and generated a great deal of negative exposure of the long-lived Dominican regime and its megalomaniac leader. Another man killed in the plot was Octavio de la Maza, a military officer the regime tried to frame in a spurious homosexual murder/suicide scenario to cover the execution of Gerald Murphy. De la Maza's hanging, one of the heinous incidents in the spotlight here, motivated his older brother Antonio to join a conspiracy to assassinate Trujillo, which he and three others accomplished five years later.

Almoína and Galíndez were two of four prominent authors who were killed by Trujillo's assassins. Novelists Andrés Requena and Ramón Marrero Arísty, author of the Dominican literary classic *Over*, were the other victims. This book details their cases, as well as several less well-known expatriate killings, such as the shooting of Sergio Bencosme in New York in 1935, the first of many incidents when Trujillo's bloody reprisals reached overseas. Nor did the vengeful dictator limit his anger to private citizens who had offended him. He also hatched plots to assassinate rival heads of state, as testified by the section of this book on the plans to kill Costa Rican president José "Pepé" Figueres in 1957. Later, when Trujillo's terrorists almost blew up Venezuelan president Rómulo Betancourt, the Organization of American States imposed its first-ever sanctions against the Trujillo regime, presaging his fall, but that

attempt is beyond the parameters of this publication. The book does provide a full account of the nefarious activities carried out by the most notorious *trujillista* agents, the repulsive Felix Bernardino and Johnny Abbes.

Like Bernardo Vega's previous work, a corpus of some twenty-six volumes indispensable to researchers of the Trujillo regime, *Almoína, Galíndez y otros criminales de Trujillo en el extranjero* is packed with details pertinent to the subject, from a wide variety of sources. Twenty years after the fact, Vega continues to reveal information derived from his foray into Trujillo's own archives during the administration of Dr. Salvador Jorge Blanco as president of the Dominican Republic. For instance, based on documents photocopied by Vega in 1984-85, the work under review demonstrates the role of the late Dr. Joaquín Balaguer in the Almoína case, among others. As ambassador to Mexico in 1948, Balaguer, who would become the dominant figure in Dominican politics from Trujillo's assassination in May 1961 until his death in 2002, first placed Almoína under surveillance. Also like many of Vega's earlier publications, this one has a wealth of photographs, but their sources are not cited. As in all of Vega's work, he draws from rich sources, but does not always tell the reader what or where they are.

Unlike most of Vega's previous books, which have appeared in a 7½ x 10½-inch format, each about an inch thick, this one is of a more manageable size. And while many volumes of Vega's oeuvre have been compendia of undigested documents, this one has something resembling a narrative flow, which makes it more readable than most of those Vega has published through the Fundación Cultural Dominicana, which he founded. Vega never encountered a detail that was not worthy of inclusion in one of his books, and the Almoína/Galíndez volume is no exception, but with such a limited subject in this case, even exhaustive chronicling of the hunting and killing of the unlucky Dominican dissidents results in less than 150 pages.

Although both were emigrants from Spain, and shared the same fate, Almoína and Galíndez were dissimilar characters, whose names share the title of this book with a certain dissonance. Whereas Almoína was a sycophant who played a double game as a hack writer for and against Trujillo, Galíndez was a serious political scientist whose analysis of the *trujillato*, published posthumously, is still of great value to students of Dominican history. The same scholars continue to be deeply indebted to Bernardo Vega for his service as a researcher, editor, and author. Anyone interested in the Trujillo regime, or in the operations of dictatorships in general, will find a grisly compilation of evidence in this book.

Bernardo Vega has been a chronicler of Dominican politics, but he has also been a participant in his country's history. He was director of the Museo del Hombre Dominicano, governor of the Dominican National Bank, and Dominican ambassador to the United States from 1997 to 1999, having been appointed by President Leonel Fernández. The first three hundred pages of

Diario de una misión en Washington are almost exactly that: Vega's ambassadorial diary. Two hundred culminating pages summarize the bilateral relationship between the Dominican Republic and the United States at the time, and reproduce the text of eight papers drafted by Ambassador Vega for presentation to various audiences. All in all, Vega has treated his own period as chief of mission in the United States as he might treat the documentary record compiled by one of his historical subjects, perhaps one of Trujillo's emissaries to Washington, which is to say that he has included just about everything there is to include: the verbatim diary, official statements, photos, graphs ... The result is an extremely useful volume packed with germane details, but lacking in narrative flow. In it, all aspects of Vega's tenure as ambassador, from high-level talks on international drug enforcement policy with the Clinton administration to ground-level tree plantings at the White House with Sammy Sosa, find their place. Getting one's hands on a diplomat's private diary, especially a witty and introspective one like this, is the dream of many foreign relations historians, who wait many years for sensitive collections of public figures' private papers to become available to researchers. But Bernardo Vega has treated his own period as chief of mission in the way historians would prefer, whereby the quotidian life of the Dominican ambassador from 1997 to 1999 is revealed now for all to see.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the specter of Trujillo that presided over Vega's tenure as ambassador. In his official position, Vega pushed for the declassification of CIA documents concerning U.S. government complicity in the dictator's assassination. He hosted an embassy dinner on the anniversary of the event, May 30, 1997, for four former U.S. embassy personnel who were posted in Ciudad Trujillo in 1961. He included the information he obtained from these efforts in his fascinating study, *Los días ultimos de Trujillo*. Describing a Red Cross charity event among the right-wing "high society" of Palm Beach, Florida, Vega recounts how he "formally greeted an interminable line of people, and upon mention of my country, some of the oldest of them told me, with pride, that they had known Trujillo." Reflecting on the evening, Vega confided to his journal, and now to us, "this job looks like it will be harder than I thought" (pp. 41-42).

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Kasmoni: Een spaartraditie in Suriname en Nederland. ASPHA BIJNAAR. Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Bert Bakker, 2002. 378 pp. (Paper € 29.45)

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It seems like such a simple thing. When saving is impossible, and neither friends nor banks want to give a loan to pay that large expense, why not get together some friends who can pay each others' large expenses collectively, in turns? This is the basic idea behind the *kasmoni*, an arrangement in which group members contribute money on a regular basis, giving one of the members the total amount of money in each round. The *kasmoni* can be classified as a ROSCA (Rotating Savings and Credit Association); the latter has received a lot of attention from economists, anthropologists, and students of development.

ROSCAs can be found in many parts of the world: they include the Chinese *ho* or *foei chen*, the Indonesia *arisan*, the Senegalese *tontine*, the Indian *bisi*, or the Trinidadian *susu*. The more we read in Aspha Bijnaar's book, the more we learn about the complexities of such a folk savings device. It turns out that Suriname's *kasmoni* is not something specifically for Creoles, is not only for women, and is not a remnant of a distant colonial past. Rather, it is a flexible arrangement adapted to many different economic contexts, suitable for many different purposes. Bijnaar's book is an excellent example of such a study's taking the social, economic, and cultural context into account. The result is a study both for specialists on the performance of informal savings and credit associations, and for those with a more general interest in Creole society in the Caribbean and abroad. The book allows readers a glimpse of the hidden world of money, trust, and savings, one of the best-kept secrets of Creole life.

Although as late as the early 1960s, Clifford Geertz (1962) was writing on rotating credit associations (particularly the Indonesian *arisan*), it wasn't until the mid-1990s that the ROSCAs became widely perceived as "Aladdin's lamp of information" (Bouman 1995), a rich source of information, and a window to the complex interrelationships between money, debts, social support, culture, and mutual trust (see also Ardener & Burman 1995).

Since the mid-1980s, the study of ROSCAs and ASCRAs (Accumulating Savings and Credit Associations) has gained momentum in the Netherlands, first with the Wageningen-based studies of Frits Bouman and Otto Hospes (1994), later because of the studies by Hotze Lont (2000, 2002) and Abram

de Swaan (1996) at the Amsterdam School of Social Sciences. De Swaan, who wrote about the establishment of nation-states and nationwide welfare systems, took the study of collectivities such as ROSCAs as a starting point for understanding market development, and for what he calls a transitional phase in the development of precapitalist to capitalist societies with widespread collective welfare arrangements (De Swaan 1988:3). This interpretation has been heavily influenced by Norbert Elias's evolutionist ideas on civilization processes and Clifford Geertz's (1962:241) ideas of the ROSCAs being a "'middle rung' in development." It is in this academic tradition that Bijnaar's study should be placed.

Throughout the book, she struggles with these evolutionist ideas, while her study actually suggests that ROSCAs are more dependent on cultural factors than on the institutional or economic context. The book is a clear illustration of the fact that the *kasmoni* flourishes among all Creoles (except for the upper classes), both in Suriname and the Netherlands. If readers skip the evolutionary discussions, they will discover a fascinating study, one that offers a clear overview of the different forms of *kasmoni*, its members, and the social and cultural contexts in which they operate. The glimpses of Creole life in which *kasmoni* is embedded are among the most interesting parts of the book. The chapters on trust, networks of social control, and relationships between the Amsterdam Bijlmer and Suriname are particularly rich in ethnographic detail. It is a pity, however, that the book is poorly structured in some places and that it includes frequent repetitions – shortcomings that, when combined with the haphazard mix of theoretical notions and empirical descriptions, make for a rather cumbersome text.

In addition, although the book is quite comprehensive and covers an impressive number of contexts and people, the choice of these contexts and people seems somewhat random. Bijnaar presumes at several points to offer an overall view of Creole *kasmoni*, and the book is full of generalizing statements, but it is not always clear that these claims are justified. One example is found in the chapter on *kasmoni* participants' motives. The motives appear to have been rather rigidly taken from the literature instead of from empirical observation. Moreover, Bijnaar's positive statements about the scope and function of *kasmoni* as a strategy to improve peoples' livelihoods and to overcome poverty seem more like wishful thinking than empirically tested assertions. The advantages of *kasmoni* are repeated many times, while readers are left with questions about the two-thirds of the population who are not involved, and about the many cases of fraud and default. And when Bijnaar mentions that the *kasmoni* is a strong tool to accumulate goods and capital, she mentions in passing that Creole society places "a strong taboo" on accumulation. It is statements like these that make readers rather curious about the scope and meaning of *kasmoni* in the wider migrant society.

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Het dagboek van Munshi Rahman Khan. SANDEW HIRA (ed.). The Hague: Amrit/Paramaribo: NSHI, 2003. x + 370 pp. (Paper € 20.00)

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As part of the activities prompted by the fact that 130 years ago the first Hindustani – in most parts of the Caribbean one would say "East Indian" – contract laborers arrived from British India in the Dutch colony of Suriname,

a volume of articles appeared that addresses the history of their emigration and emancipation as well as the most important aspects of the present position in the Netherlands of those of their descendants who moved on to become Dutch citizens in that country.

As a community, these men and women are very conscious of their triple loyalty to their adopted country, to Suriname and, increasingly, though not dominantly, also to India. The volume that records the history of the past 130 years and analyzes the present position of the community advertises itself as a memorial book (*gedenkbboek*). Its twelve articles or chapters, however, offer a thorough, though perhaps not exhaustive, state-of-the-art representation of the research done during the last decade or so into various aspects of the history, emancipation and cultural situation of the Hindustanis, as they prefer to be known in the Netherlands. The eight authors of these chapters are all Hindustanis themselves, which convincingly appears to proclaim the achievements and self-sufficiency of this minority group in Dutch society.

The authors undoubtedly intend to convey the impression of self-confidence; it is also justified. This is especially clear in the criticism with which all the authors courageously address the weaknesses and as yet unfulfilled promises in the process of Hindustani emancipation, e.g., when they speak of the life expectancy of the Hindustanis and the incidence of divorce among its members. Overall, however, they strike a note of satisfaction with the open and pluralist structure of Dutch society, which has enabled them to integrate as well as establish their own government-subsidized schools, to retain their identity and develop it, as well as to rise to higher levels of education and income.

Apart from the subjects indicated above, there are separate chapters on the religious organizations of Hindus and Muslims, on the emancipation of women, the dynamics of Hindustani youth culture, on Sarnami as the Hindi dialect that emerged in Suriname and still is very much a living part of the Hindustani heritage, and on participation in Dutch politics. The volume is particularly strong in its demographic analysis, and its many tables lend solidity to its conclusions.

There is, within the Hindustani community, still rather limited knowledge about the exact kind of Indian society and local culture that the contract laborers were a part of. The centuries-old tradition of migrant labor, or *naukari*, that they represented, survives in different forms in modern India and can hardly be traced or imagined even by those who visit India in search of the world their forefathers left behind. They therefore often seem to assume that Bhojpuri society (Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar) in the period of emigration resembled what we have assumed is typically Indian: a caste, dowry, and joint family (p. 138) system, in which the women lived in *parda*, i.e. veiled seclusion (p. 146). The practice of a girl's parents' asking a bride price, for example, is mistakenly considered as an adulteration of the originally pure custom of giving a dowry (pp. 51, 158, where the two customs

are confused). All these customs, however, hardly prevailed in the kind of society the contract laborers were brought up in.

As to the analysis of the present, however, the authors are at their best. Rather than a "transnational" part of a worldwide Indian diaspora, H. Ramsoedh argues, the Hindustani community participates primarily in Dutch society. On the other hand, no "institutional completeness," i.e. a situation in which all social functions are served by exclusively ethnic institutions, prevents its integration in Dutch society (pp. 114, 117). B. Lalmahomed, to give another example, candidly speaks of the method of bringing up children on the principle of thrashing (*ranselpedagogiek*) that used to prevail in Hindustani families. And C.E.S. Choenni, the main author of the volume, notices that, contrary to what is often assumed, Hindustanis have still not caught up with the Surinamese Creole immigrants in the Netherlands. The volume is a convincing witness to the intellectual potential of self-analysis of the Hindustani community.

The second book reviewed here is a Dutch version of the autobiography of Munshi Rahman Khan, a Pathan from the Hamirpur district in the United Provinces, as Uttar Pradesh was then called, of British India. He received a good education and had, before he signed a contract to go to Suriname in 1898, served as a school teacher, which justified his title of *munshi*. This background, exceptional amongst the first generation of Hindustanis in Suriname, partly explains his successful career as a foreman at several plantations, as a community leader, who was, moreover, knowledgeable in both the Hindu and the Muslim customs of the region he came from and in the traditional texts popular there, such as Tulsidas's *Ramcharitmanas*, and he had some skill as a poet and writer.

Amongst the list of works that Munshi Rahman Khan left behind, the most important is his *Jivan Prakash*, the story of his life. This represents, as the preface to this volume rightly claims, a unique document and the only one in which an East Indian contract laborer in the Caribbean tells the story of his recruitment, journey, his life on the plantations, and, finally, his career as a free immigrant. It is not a diary (*dagboek*), though the editor, Sandew Hira, uses that word, even on the title page. The text, however, is certainly of great historical significance and is, in itself, a monument to all those who came to the Caribbean from British India and stayed on. Munshi Rahman Khan, moreover, writes with gusto, and it is a pleasure to follow him through the many conflicts and job changes he went through.

Autobiography is a genre that, compared to Europe, is thinly represented in India. The exceptions to this rule are, however, often of great quality. The famous Ananda Ranga Pillai of Madras is an early example. The diaries of Amar Singh of Jaipur, written two hundred years later and now becoming known to the public thanks to the work of Lloyd and Susanne Rudolph and others, represent a rare exercise in self-reflection. Munshi Rahman Khan's

work belongs in the category of these great authors, because he gives much more than his memoirs and a number of insights into the world of migrant labor with its attendant features of identity change (pp. 154-55, see Choenni and Adhin, p. 30), survival strategy, and upward mobility. It seems to me that an important aspect of his drive to write this story was to justify, in the first place to his five sons, his refusal to return to India, where his father desperately needed him, and his desire to convince his acquaintances that his efforts not simply to lead, but to “act out,” the life of a true Indian in Suriname had not been in vain. This psychological aspect of self-justification, I suggest, deserves further study and research.

The last part of the story deals with the increasing estrangement of Hindus and Muslims that, according to Munshi Rahman Khan, began with the arrival, in 1929, of an Arya Samaji missionary in Suriname and with the practice of conversion or reconversion that became prevalent soon after. It would be interesting to put the story of this Hindu-Muslim boycott, as the autobiography tells it, in a wider historical context, the more so as, according to the editor, it is not mentioned anywhere else (p. 16).

There is, in other words, still a task ahead before full justice is done to this very important text. The editor notices the intention of the International Institute of Social History (IISG) at Amsterdam to publish an English edition soon. Hopefully, this will be a more careful edition than the present one. Sandew Hira candidly admits (p. 4) that his knowledge of the languages and the script used by Munshi Rahman Khan – Hindi, Avadhi, and Urdu – is deficient and that the text as he presents it, is a Dutch adaption of an English translation that is itself somewhat flawed. The translators, apparently, were not aware of the meaning of quite a few simple Hindustani words most of which have an Indian rather than a Surinamese context. Examples are: *patwari* (village scribe), *kharif* (autumn harvest), *tahsil* (revenue collection, fiscal area), *mauza* (fiscal village), *kila* (fort), *dhoti* (not trousers, but loincloth), and *laddu* (not a cookie), and this is not an exhaustive list. I counted at least 130 little printing and spelling errors; many words and names are spelled in various ways; in my copy of the book, the last four pages are printed twice. The map at the beginning of the part dealing with the 1890s oddly represents postindependence India. Moreover, much more work is still to be done on annotation, though the more than 300 notes given are, for the most part, valuable, especially as far as they refer to the Surinamese background. Munshi Rahman Khan, however, survives all these imperfections and should be read.

Dark Shamans: Kanaimà and the Poetics of Violent Death. NEIL L. WHITEHEAD. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2002. 309 pp. (Paper US\$ 19.95)

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Anthropologists have devoted less attention to war and violence than historians and many others in the social sciences. *Dark Shamans* seeks to partially redress this state of affairs by advocating that violence and killing may be viewed as cultural performance. To this end Whitehead examines *kanaimà* in the Guyana hinterlands bordering Venezuela and Brazil. Widespread within this region, *kanaimà* (or a cognate term) and closely related ideas are shared by a number of neighboring peoples – Patamuna, Makushi, Pemon, Akawaio, Lokono, Karinya, Warao, and Wapishana. Used in precise ways to describe specific forms of mutilation, killing, and the imbibing of liquid from the decaying corpse of the victim, the term may also be employed in more diffuse and metaphorical senses. *Kanaimà* may refer to malignant spirits, a particular form of apprenticeship to a killer protector, and a relationship between humans and natural forces. *Kanaimà* killing highlights ethnic boundaries and disputes within families and between affines. It may be implicated in political squabbles and used to target colonial and state authorities. Additionally, *kanaimà* has been popularized in different western media as a sort of supernatural Amerindian killer, often assuming animal shape, emanating from the demon landscape of the tropics. While indigenous folks fear it, avoid it, and sometimes deny its very existence, and many believers would see it extirpated, all recognize it as an authentic indigenous practice. As such, *kanaimà* may also be seen as a form of resistance to impositions of indigenous headmen and state authority alike.

Delighting in this profusion of appearances, Whitehead considers *kanaimà* to be a “cultural proclivity,” “an authentic and legitimate form of cultural expression,” and a shaper of identity (pp. 245–46). The book represents an attempt to describe native engagement with *kanaimà* and its contribution to the lifeways of indigenous Guyana. Understanding depends as well on an historical contextualization of cultural practices through time. The work, then, is in the anthropological tradition of unveiling the logic and meanings of exotic practices in order to show the order and sense behind them by means of a recalibration in terms of an unfamiliar cultural logic. In particular, Whitehead

seeks to show that *kanaimà* killing is a ritual act comprehensible in terms of shamanic beliefs that overlap and contrast with other shamanic forms and non-shamanic beliefs (Christianity). Two major issues are raised by this approach. The first entails the adequacy of the account as a description of *kanaimà*. Here we see that the very pervasiveness and multiplicity of usages threaten to undermine any specific analysis framed exclusively in terms of ritual practice. The second issue entails the adequacy and even the ethics of an interpretive approach to violence and victimhood as cultural performance.

The book opens with introductory material in which we learn how Whitehead himself was threatened by *kanaimà*, and of his difficulties in studying the theme. We learn rather less about the community setting of the research, most of which apparently occurred in the Paramakatoi community, whose population of nearly 1,000 places it in the high end of village size among the Patamuna. The research depended on the cooperation of different individuals, all of whom were differently situated as bystanders, potential victims, or killers who for their own reasons revealed what they knew and believed. One gets the impression that knowledge of *kanaimà* was quite unevenly distributed, and even when Whitehead felt that young braggarts knew less than they professed about the ritual intricacies, high-level experts would reveal rather less than they knew. Women apparently had a different take from men: "I repeatedly observed that women were told only about certain features of *kanaimà*, particularly its connection to warfare and the Kwayaus [warriors], but that its shamanic purposes were never so revealed" (p. 123). Perhaps this partly explains Whitehead's claim that females found the prospect of *kanaimà* assault to have erotic appeal (e.g., p. 105).

Whitehead presents copious historical material to document the rise and changing forms of *kanaimà* (although not its origin), with particular attention to the spread of gun warfare and slave-raiders and explicit mention of *kanaimà* in the opening of the nineteenth century (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 attempts to debunk the idea that *kanaimà* is essentially a mechanism to exact revenge or retribution for social trespasses. This entails descriptions of other shamanic forms and their historical emergence and change in the following chapter. Chapter 5 considers the representation of *kanaimà* within the rise of the traditional/modern dichotomy in the context of interactions with development ideology and the state, including involvement in mining activity. In the end, however, efforts to close off other meanings of *kanaimà* by reducing it to discourse about a kind of shamanic practice are unconvincing. In some cases, *kanaimà* does appear to avenge wrongdoing; in others it seems to refer to undifferentiated evil or to the uncontrollability of young male delinquents. Shuttering down meanings of *kanaimà* to focus on shamanism ultimately can be linked to Whitehead's attempt to analytically show the interpolations between the cultural poetics of *kanaimà* and warfare and diverse forms of violence more generally.

The book is written for disciplinary and area specialists. That might not be a great loss to the general reader, who will assuredly experience puzzlement at the conclusion that by understanding “violence as a cultural performance of ritual and symbolic categories, as much as an expression of social-structural contradictions and conflicts, one can finally move beyond the sterile opposition of structure to agency” (p. 243). In the end, the book promises understanding, but this understanding is geared to throw light on analytical method rather than human experience. In fact, the book shows a distressing lack of attention, theoretical and otherwise, to the pervasive ways that acts and threats of violence cast their leaden shadow over the routines of daily life. How do people change their residence arrangements, economic and social activities, and even ways of thinking under the oppressive threat of violence? Despite Whitehead’s honorable intentions to shed light on victims as well as killers, *Dark Shamans* privileges killers as the agents of cultural performances. In the process of showing that violence is not senseless – indeed that it is meaningful – the book sacrifices an opportunity to show how alternatives to violence are also being enacted and just what their meanings might be for the rest of us.

The Luxury of Nationalist Despair: George Lamming’s Fiction as Decolonizing Project. A.J. SIMOES DA SILVA. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000. 217 pp. (US\$ 17.00)

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According to A.J. Simoes da Silva in this provocatively titled monograph, the reputation of Barbadian novelist and essayist George Lamming “remains on the whole intriguingly obscure” (p. 1). But to whom? It is undeniable of course that Lamming – author of six novels (one a canonized classic), a memoir, an edited collection, a volume of addresses, statements, and interviews, a short collection of essays, and more – has not received the sorts of acclaim that have lately come the way of such of his contemporaries as Derek Walcott, V.S. Naipaul, and Kamau Brathwaite. But “obscure”? This judgment depends plenty on how you define “reputation,” on what counts as the authority of recognition. Perhaps it is more true to say that Lamming’s reputation travels

– at least in part – in different intellectual circuits. And this fact may have to do not merely with the nature of his aspiration for recognition, but with his understanding of his commitments as a publicly engaged writer and his sense of the principal location of his audience. At any rate, it is certainly not hard to find a significant measure of critical concern with his work in a number of overlapping communities or readers: those postcolonial critics, for example, who are particularly interested in the interrogation of language and history in colonial and anticolonial discourse (Nadi Edwards, Helen Tiffin, Simon Gikandi); those critics and historians engaged in the re-problematization of Englishness and Empire in Britain (Bill Schwarz, Peter Hulme); and those scholars concerned with re-mapping the contours of a Caribbean intellectual tradition (some of my own preoccupations might be situated here).

Lamming's reputation, then, is not "obscure," though the nature of it – and the sources and center of it – might well be worth investigation by an acute scholar. Interestingly, however, da Silva's study is not offered as a reading of the meaning of Lamming's reputation. Rather it is offered as what he calls "a long-overdue re-evaluation of the novels" (p. 17). Long-overdue? *The Luxury of Nationalist Despair* joins two other monographs devoted exclusively to Lamming's work: Sandra Pouchet Paquet's seminal book, *The Novels of George Lamming* (1982), and Supriya Nair's more recent study, *Caliban's Curse: George Lamming and the Revisioning of History* (1996). Not many then, and not yesterday. But da Silva means to suggest more than quantity and time. He means to distance himself from these and other critics of Lamming in whose work he finds a conventional and congratulatory endorsement of Lamming's own self-assessments.

One of the challenges faced by a critic of George Lamming, da Silva suggests, is to evade his prescriptions for how his work should be understood. Lamming is a strong and forceful writer with pronounced views about colonialism and its aftermath; he is also a self-consciously theoretical and sometimes polemical writer. If his novels are not strictly speaking programmatic books, they are certainly books with an undisguised agenda. And moreover, in the large number of addresses and interviews he has given since the 1960s he has almost obsessively cultivated a comprehensive picture of the project – decolonizing the mind, in the famous phrase of one of his early admirers, Ngugi wa Thiong'o – to which he has dedicated his literary-intellectual energies. So it may not be entirely surprising that many critics – especially those who share his nationalist aspirations – would find it hard to read against the grain of these self-understandings. Da Silva demurs. He does not doubt that the novels are anticolonial allegories – fiction speaking back to colonial power – but he insists that what these narrowly focused readings have missed are the conflicts, ambiguities, silencings, and exclusions that are at the center of Lamming's narratives. These are what da Silva's

book aims to explore. Or rather, *expose*. For in the end he finds Lamming's decolonizing project a failure.

Framed by an introductory chapter discussing Lamming's autobiographical meditation on writing and empire, *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960), da Silva's book is organized into thematic chapters each discussing two of the novels. *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953) and *Of Age and Innocence* (1958) are explored in the second chapter, which focuses on racial identity and anticolonial nationalism. In da Silva's view, "race" is Lamming's "primary source of inspiration" (p. 38), and the work as a whole (but these two novels in particular) are characterized – indeed, are marred and ultimately undermined – by his Afrocentric obsessions. *The Emigrants* (1954) and *Season of Adventure* (1960) are discussed in the third chapter, with a focus on the gendered representation of nationalism and the nation. Lamming's narratives, da Silva argues, have a "masculinist tone" (p. 17); they marginalize the presence and voice of women. In both these novels, he says, "a transgressive sexuality becomes the medium through which a consideration of gender is eventually excluded from the national vision the novels construct" (p. 100). Finally, *Water with Berries* (1971) and *Natives of My Person* (1972) are discussed in the fourth chapter, which focuses on Lamming's concern with reordering the history of the colonial past so as to enable a liberatory postcolonial future. But here again, Lamming's vision is flawed inasmuch as the past is seen as "obsessively oppressive" (p. 155), ultimately cramping the agency of the colonized.

So while da Silva may faintly admire Lamming's interrogations of the colonial order and his redemptive vision (or at least his desire for one) of a new relation between the former colonizer and the former colonized, he nevertheless finds in the end that Lamming's work falls far short of realizing a truly postcolonial objective (whatever that might be). He writes:

Insofar as the works remain focused on the colonial past of the Caribbean, they succumb to an incapacity to imagine a truly postcolonial future. Ambiguity, of a constraining nature, becomes the quality that impels the work. I want to propose, then, that the "luxury of despair" stands as both epigraph and epilogue to Lamming's novels. Despite their recognition of the ongoing nature of the colonial experience in the mind of the colonized, they ultimately articulate a depressing sense of closure, an intellectualized denial of the vitality of Caribbean reality through their refusal to imagine solutions for the future. (p. 7)

This excoriating judgment is reiterated again and again throughout the book. Instead of projecting beyond the acrimonious relation between colonizer and colonized, and between white and black, Lamming can only look ahead into an abyss of disillusion and take refuge in a "luxury of nationalist despair." He remains imprisoned inside his anticolonial resentments. Too great an unwillingness to give up a politics of blame leads Lamming again and again into dead ends, and as a consequence the possibilities for real postcolonial

resolution to the legacies of conflict colonialism bequeathed are obscured from him. Part of the problem for da Silva is that Lamming ignores the “reality” of Caribbean culture. Lamming’s preoccupation with “separation and fragmentation perpetuates a recriminatory mode of looking at the past which bypasses the highly syncretic nature of today’s Caribbean societies” (p. 198). The judgment is a curious one for many reasons, not the least being that it presupposes a whole social anthropology of Caribbean society and culture that da Silva nowhere supplies.

There is much that is illuminating in da Silva’s book. A substantial scholarship informs his very readable narrative. But on the whole I remain unconvinced by the critical *approach* he adopts. The mode of criticism here is the now fairly familiar one in which a reading aims to identify what the work (or body of work) leaves out, leaves unanswered, without a satisfactory reconstruction of the work’s own project. It is undeniable that Lamming’s fiction is constrained by a certain idiom (a certain *raced* idiom as well as a certain *gendered* idiom), and by a distinctive conception of purposes and horizon of vision. And doubtlessly, therefore, the fiction endorses a certain normative dialectic of inclusion and exclusion, of visibility and invisibility. But what were the historico-discursive conditions that shaped the problem-space of intelligibility of Lamming’s decolonizing project? Looking back at the colonial Lamming looking forward beyond colonialism, how can we reconstruct the intelligibility of the nationalist answers his work offers? How might we excavate the questions he felt compelled to answer, and why did the tropes, figures, metaphors, and subject-positions he mobilized find the conceptual warrant they did? Da Silva seems unconcerned about inquiring into these sorts of questions.

The proper task of criticism, it seems to me, is neither to endorse nor to condemn work by virtue of its context. Rather it is to map the difference between the problem-field of writing and the problem-field of reading. On this view it is certainly important that Lamming’s narratives position women or blacks or others in the specific ways they do. This is important, however, not because it demonstrates the success or failure of his postcolonial imagination, but because it helps us locate and clarify the determinations of his vision, and by so doing to raise the possibility of *our* envisioning *differently*.

The Flight of the Vernacular. MARIA CRISTINA FUMAGALLI. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2001. xvi + 303 pp. (Paper US\$ 28.00)

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The study and appreciation of Anglophone Irish and Caribbean poets have generally been framed within the paradigms of either national, Commonwealth or, more recently, postcolonial literary approaches. This has led in turn to a focus on influences and reactions, "writing back" to mainstream English poets and traditions. In Caribbean literary criticism for example, there is a recurring emphasis on the "kicking daffodils" trope, the dual acknowledgement and rejection of Wordsworth as a metonymic figure for English nature poetry whose images and metaphors were alien to the Caribbean world. Alternatively, as in the case of Heaney and Walcott, a concern with locating their poetry within a distinctively Irish or Caribbean national tradition has steered the critics toward comparisons with other poets from the same area and a concentration on distinctively Irish or Caribbean sources, voices, and inspiration.

Thus, Maria Cristina Fumagalli's study of Heaney and Walcott in relation to Dante offers significantly new perspectives. Of course Heaney's translations of Dante and allusions to his work have been acknowledged previously. Nor is this the first work to compare Walcott and Heaney, although none have done so in such depth and in such implicit and explicit detail. But the thorough exploration of Dante's significance to both poets is new and directs our attention to different terrain and fresh ways of understanding these poets. Perhaps most importantly, it is a means of insisting that we can see these poets (and by extension many other West Indian writers such as Wilson Harris, Lorna Goodison, and Earl Lovelace, to name just three) as *both* cosmopolitan and national, drawing on a response to the cosmopolitan resources of other cultures and languages to enrich their local cultures and traditions.

Fumagalli's analysis of Heaney's response to Dante is thorough and illuminating, but for the purposes of this review I will concentrate more on her discussion of Walcott, whose debt to Dante has been given much less attention in other critical works. This lack of attention is surprising, given the continuous references to Dante in Walcott's oeuvre. Among his earliest works are a play called *Paolo and Francesca*, and a long twelve-canto poem written in his teens, *Epitaph for the Young*. To some extent the allusions to Dante here are filtered through T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, but the whole concept

of the poem, the specific ways in which it draws on the metaphor of life as a journey, the references to Dante's Ulysses (in Canto X), the search for a guide or father figure to lead him through his journey, demonstrate Walcott's thorough acquaintance with Dante at this stage and foreshadow his continuing influence in later long narrative poems such as *Another Life* and *Omeros*, which also adapts Dante's *terza rima*.

However, the Dante encountered in this early poem, and sometimes parodied, is a version "written on official paper," as Heaney phrased it in reference to many of the translations he first knew (1985:16). It is only later that Walcott realizes the extraordinary linguistic feat accomplished by Dante, a feat which he seeks to emulate in those later poems, of "giving the vernacular its head" and allowing it both eloquence and authority.

In one of the best chapters in this book, Fumagalli demonstrates Dante's influence in the shaping of Walcott's autobiographical *Another Life*. Although the title is an almost direct translation of Dante's title for his *Vita Nuova*, critics have mainly directed their comparisons to Wordsworth's *Prelude*. Like Dante's series of lyrics regarding his relationship with Beatrice, Walcott's poem revolves around his relationship with Anna, and with artist friends. Both poets are concerned with a maturing understanding of interaction between art and life, and the reshaping of memory and the past through imagination. But it is also in the *Vita Nuova* that Dante celebrates the vernacular as a fitting vehicle for poetry of high ambition. In a valuable interview with the author and published as an appendix to her book, Walcott affirms Dante's gift to poets who wish to realize the potential of the vernacular thus: "the really astonishing thing in Dante ... is to have a tone that is not rhetorical ... In Dante the greatest parts are based on the colloquial, the immediate, the vernacular ... I don't mean grammar, diction, language, I mean the immediacy of the voice" (p. 66). Fumagalli argues that this "immediacy of voice" applied to the "high" subject of the relationship between art and life is first fully achieved by Walcott in *Another Life*.

Omeros is given a long chapter which traces both the specific allusions to passages in the *Commedia*, and the deployment of language, structure, and verse forms which owe much to that great vernacular epic. Fumagalli also points out the significance of *Paradiso* to *Bounty*, which is indeed bountiful in its acknowledgment of a wide range of poetic influences, and includes a series of "Italian Eclogues," replete with Dantean references, dedicated to Joseph Brodsky. These final chapters conclude an important and thoroughly scholarly study, which will be an invaluable resource for those who seek a fuller understanding of the influences, techniques, and aesthetics that inform the work of both Walcott and Heaney.

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Caribbean-English Passages: Intertextuality in a Postcolonial Tradition.
TOBIAS DÖRING. London: Routledge, 2002. xii + 236 pp. (Cloth US\$ 85.00)

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Tobias Döring's *Caribbean-English Passages: Intertextuality in a Postcolonial Tradition* is a book with many merits, one of which must be its constant reminder that, as the Haitian scholar Michel-Rolph Trouillot (1992:22) has succinctly put it, "the Caribbean is nothing but contact." In addition, through its thorough study of the politics of genre, Döring's book helps to dismantle the notion of a monolithic imperial/colonial discourse and refocuses postcolonial discourse on Caribbean history of cultural and textual resistance. Döring, in fact, takes his readers on a "grand tour" of Caribbean and English literature and, thanks to a mixture of attentive close reading and rigorous theoretical thinking, he projects them beyond that "first reading" in which, as Antonio Benítez-Rojo (1996:2) points out using Roland Barthes as a springboard, "the reader inevitably reads himself." As a matter of fact, what Döring does most effectively is the "kind of reading in which every text," at times surprisingly but always enrichingly, "begins to reveal its own textuality" – to borrow Benítez-Rojo's words one more time.

Caribbean-English Passages is divided into six chapters, each of which focuses on one particular genre: travel writing, nature poetry, adventure novels, autobiography, picture poetry, and the epic. The first chapter is aptly dedicated to travel writing "because this genre manifests the idea of passage most concretely" (p. 16) and provides an interrelated reading of V.S. Naipaul's *The Middle Passage* (1962), J.A. Froude's *The English in the West Indies* (1887), Edgar Mittelholzer's *With a Carib Eye* (1958), and Amryl Johnson's *Sequins for a Ragged Hem* (1988). Chapter 2 turns to plantation writing and nature poetry: here the key text is James Grainger's *The Sugar-Cane* (1764), the first West Indian georgic. As an art of place that attempts

to “reconcile the pressures of experience with the pressure of prevailing cultural norms” (p. 63), it is intriguingly offered as a significant precedent for postcolonial Caribbean writing such as Grace Nichols’s 1990 poem, “Sugar Cane” or David Dabydeen’s 1984 collection, *Slave Song*. Chapter 3 reads Wilson Harris’s novel, *The Secret Ladder* (1963), contrapuntally against Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and, less predictably, Arthur Conan Doyle’s *The Lost World* (1912). Chapter 4 centers on V.S. Naipaul’s *The Enigma of Arrival* (1987) and David Dabydeen’s *The Intended* (1991) and their engagement with, respectively, English and Caribbean pre-texts. Further cogency (and this is a very cogent book despite the wide variety of texts that it analyzes) is added by the fact that both Caribbean texts are also preoccupied with Conrad’s *fin-de-siècle* novel. In Chapter 5, Dabydeen’s long poem *Turner* (1994) is studied alongside Turner’s painting *Slavers Throwing Overboard the Dead and Dying – Typhoon Coming on* (1840) and John Ruskin’s famous review of it. In so doing, Döring demonstrates that postcolonial ekphrasis can be a very efficacious strategy for dismemberment of the colonial past. In Chapter 6, Derek Walcott’s *Omeros* (1990) is also read as an act of poetic ekphrasis and decanonization while (among other things) Döring tackles the issue of the appropriatedness of a Caribbean epic. Every chapter is accompanied by a thought-provoking illustration. For instance, Chapter 6 is paired with Nicolas Vleughels’s *The Shield of Achilles* (1715) and Chapter 1 is opened by “Waiting for the Races,” an illustration in Charles Kingsley’s travelogue *At Last: A Christmas in the West Indies* (1890). This engraving portrays three different races in Trinidad – Afro-Caribbeans, East Indians, and Chinese – dressed in typifying costumes and standing by the race-course railings. Döring discusses this Victorian representation of races in the context of Naipaul’s own re-reading of the image in his own travelogue.

An exclusive focus on “Caribbean-English passages” such as the one promoted by this book might feel a bit “claustrophobic” at times, but the sheer richness of Döring’s intertextual networking more than compensates for this. My only regret is that, in the “Introduction” to the volume, Döring engages in a fruitless polemic rebuttal of Silvio Torres-Saillant’s *Caribbean Poetics: Toward an Aesthetic of West Indian Literature* (1997). While *Caribbean Poetics*, a controversial but significant book, aims “to show that the literatures written in European languages in the Caribbean area constitute a regionally unified and coherent socioaesthetic corpus with its own identity” (Torres-Saillant 1997:xi), Döring sets out to make what he calls “the counterclaim” (my emphasis) and “to chart the intertextual lines that connect some Caribbean writing with English writing” (pp. 5, 6). It is unnecessary and unhelpful to oppose these two critical strategies, especially because one approach does not have to exclude and/or devalue the other (and I level this criticism against *both* Döring and Torres-Saillant, who also adopts a “prescriptive” and “exclusivist” tone in his own book). After all, Döring readily

admits that his “focus on English literary ancestries ... inevitably leaves out a good deal that clearly is of relevance” (p. 8) and Torres-Saillant (1997:278) states that Caribbean writers “enter into decisive conversations with a colonial legacy. Whether they correct or affirm, revise or deny, adapt or update, recycle or subvert, they are dealing directly or indirectly with colonial inter-texts.”

Caribbean-English Passages is valuable and challenging, engaged and engaging. It is therefore unfortunate that Routledge is publishing it only in hardback, thus denying it a much wider circulation and, crucially, accessibility to students who would benefit from its astute insights as much as the “specialists” in the field to whom it is directed.

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Race and the Unconscious: Freudianism in French Caribbean Thought. CELIA BRITTON. Oxford: Legenda, 2002. 115 pp. (Paper £19.50)

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This relatively brief monograph – four chapters, introduction, and conclusion in just over one hundred pages – is of the rare variety that elicits the reaction: “why didn’t I think of that?” Celia Britton has undertaken a thorough, closely argued review of the basic texts that have involved one or another version of psychoanalysis and/or depth psychology (Freud, Jung, Lacan especially) in elaborating a discourse on ethnicity in the French West Indies since the early 1940s. The result is as brilliant as it is stylistically dense.

Chapter 1, "French Surrealism and Ethnography," covers the material that has been most studied, though not always well. Britton mines the pages of *Tropiques*, the magazine produced between 1941 and 1945 by teachers at the Lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France, Martinique, for the links between ethnographic surrealism and an unorthodox reading of Freud by André Breton and others. My own *Modernism and Negritude* and James Clifford's *The Predicament of Culture* trod this path earlier. Britton builds on those books while teasing out important differences between the interpretations of Freud given by René Ménil, Aimé Césaire, and his wife Suzanne. Her results are both stimulating and unexpected.

The second chapter, "Politics and Psychosis: The Limits of Psychoanalysis," focuses on Frantz Fanon's *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952). Considerable confusion exists among commentators on Fanon's published doctoral thesis, which has been invoked to bolster quite contradictory positions in the past. Britton's exegesis is particularly fine and deserves to be the point of departure for future studies of Fanon's early work, which is shown here to manifest important unresolved contradictions of its own. Readers will be particularly grateful to Britton for clarifying Fanon's strange claim that homosexuality does not exist in Martinique and for demonstrating his precise relationship to Lacan. On this last point confusion has reigned in recent years among literary theorists who have claimed that Fanon's version of Freud corresponds to that of Lacan in the articles collected in *Écrits* (1966).

The third chapter, "Psychoanalysis and Social (Dis)Order," focuses initially on Césaire's *Discours sur le colonialisme* as an attack against Octave Mannoni's Adlerian interpretation of the Malagasys's need to be colonized in *Psychologie de la colonisation* (1949). Having clarified this messy attempt to justify colonialism through spurious social science, Britton discusses Glissant's debate with Maud Mannoni in *Le Discours antillais* (1981). She carefully analyzes those of Glissant's criticisms that she finds germane and points out those that she finds irrelevant because of Mannoni's quite different purpose in her case study of a Martinican man's identity crisis. The argument deserves the careful attention Britton lavishes on it. The chapter concludes with a brief consideration of "the so-called matrifocal family in Afro-Caribbean and African-American society" (p. 69) that Fritz Gracchus produced in *Les Lieux de la mère* (1986). Like Maud Mannoni, Gracchus uses specifically Lacanian categories to analyze those aspects of diasporic family life that Western, neo-Freudian social science considers dysfunctional. This topos creates a bridge to the fourth and final chapter, "Oedipe noir?"

In this chapter, *Race and the Unconscious...* goes back to the 1924-25 Malinowski-Jones debate over the universality of the Oedipus complex. Acknowledging that the neo-Surrealists of the *Tropiques* group were unaware of this debate in the early 1940s, Britton then takes up the anti-Oedipus theory of J. Deleuze and F. Guattari (1972). Their conclusion that the univer-

salinity of the Oedipal situation is ultimately undecidable takes into account modifications that both Lacan and Lévi-Strauss brought to classical Freudian theory. Britton then returns to Fanon in this new context to give a luminous exegesis of his “unresolved Oedipus complex” (p. 86). A further illuminating discussion of Gracchus’s attack on Fanon results in the conclusion that “Gracchus’s position is thus not as clearly distinct from Fanon’s as he implies it is...” (p. 90). In sum,

as we compare Fanon and Gracchus against the background of a convoluted and in some sense unresolvable discussion that started fifty years earlier, two clear conclusions nevertheless emerge. First, we have seen how the imbrication of racial issues with those of gender is inescapable, and does not always take a positive or even benign form. Secondly, the conceptual “undecidability” of the Oedipus complex is to some extent both a cause and an effect of its importance in the arena of racial politics. (p. 94)

There is no doubt whatever that Celia Britton has demonstrated “the constant return of Antillean intellectuals to Freudianism, despite its problems” (p. 105). The question that perplexed Caribbeanists will ask is “why?” The answer to that question will require a broader-based interrogation of the intellectual, as well as socioeconomic, dependence of the Caribbean DOMs on France itself since the mid-twentieth century. Richard D.E. Burton’s *French and West Indian* (1994/1995) has gone some way toward providing the elements of that analysis.

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Place, Language, and Identity in Afro-Costa Rican Literature. DOROTHY E. MOSBY. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003. xiii + 248 pp. (Cloth, US\$ 34.95)

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Place, Language, and Identity in Afro-Costa Rican Literature is a tremendously ambitious book, and one which all will agree is long overdue. Dorothy E. Mosby attempts to cover over one hundred years of the history of a people in some two hundred pages, but does it with relative success. For perhaps too long, blacks in Latin America have lived with invisibility in terms of their identity. But in the last four decades, Afro-Hispanic literature has emerged, and this vibrant, rich body of writing gives voice to the strong influence of this people on the dominant culture of a region. The book takes as its center the Central American nation of Costa Rica, which is mainly Hispanic, and interrogates representations of blackness by Anglophone immigrants and their descendants. At the start of the introduction, in a section entitled "Historical Foundations: Background on the Afro-West Indian Presence in Costa Rica," Mosby presents an overview of the existence of an indigenous black population, as well as a population descended from Francophone immigrants. She describes texts by these writers as being in short supply, lost, or nonexistent.

The book is concisely written. In the introduction, Mosby indicates her intention to carry out a reading of Afro-Costa Rican literature through the use of postcolonial theory. This choice seems appropriate given that, as she writes, "Place, displacement, language and nation are important notions expressed in Afro-Hispanic and other 'New World' literatures because they link the subject-self to history, culture, and, ultimately, identity" (p. 25). She also presents a concise history of the presence of Anglophone-descent blacks in Costa Rica along with a review of the limited studies to date on Afro-Costa Rican literature. Finally, the introduction outlines the two central tensions in most Latin American Hispanic nations: whitening and naming. Costa Rica, Mosby concludes, is informed by an ethnically homogeneous Hispanic identity that denies any racial diversity.

Chapter 1, "Roots and Routes," traces the foundations of black writing in Costa Rica. From the folkloric "Anancy Stories" to Calypso, she examines the influence of orality on the literature. Perhaps most interestingly, Mosby

moves from works such as the poetry of Alderman Johnson Roden and the short stories of Dorothy Joseph Montout, which are written in English, to an exploration of the newspapers of the day, also written in English, which provide vital information on the tradition of literacy among first- and second-generation Afro-Costa Rican writers.

Second-generation Afro-Costa Rican Eulalia Bernard's poetry is given center stage in Chapter 2: "Negotiating Home: The Poetry of Eulalia Bernard." The chapter begins with a short biography of Bernard, the daughter of Jamaican immigrants. Then, close readings of several of her poems inform most of the rest of this chapter, as much of her poetry is what Mosby admits is a (re)negotiation of black cultural identity for West Indian-descent Costa Ricans. Mosby concludes (rightly) that Bernard's work is doubly creolized as she imagines a Jamaica long abandoned while remaining firmly rooted in the Costa Rican province of Limón where she grew up.

Chapter 3, "Quince Duncan and the Development of Afro-Costa Rican Identity," focuses on the writing of Quince Duncan, one of Costa Rica's most prolific black authors, depicting him as representative of a third generation of Afro-Costa Ricans who have greatly impacted the nation's literary production. Through close analyses of Duncan's three novels of identity, *Hombres curtidos* (1971), *Los cuatro espejos* (1973), and *La paz del pueblo* (1976), Mosby concludes that Duncan presents themes of place, displacement, and exile, all of which are extremely relevant to the (re)construction of cultural and national identity.

Chapter 4, appropriately entitled "To Be Young, Gifted and Black: Shirley Campbell and Delia McDonald," begins at the post-Civil War years in Costa Rica. Mosby asserts that this fourth generation of blacks clearly and definitively affirms black identity. Both Campbell and McDonald revisit the works of outstanding black Caribbean writers such as Aimé Césaire and Nicolás Guillén and in that same vein present a strong Caribbean identity which has black ancestral roots but which has a firmly integrated (in this case) Costa Rican future. The West Indies remains an historical landmark, which marks the memory of Afro-Costa Ricans. But more than anything, members of this generation quite affirm their ethnicity, accept their history of displacement, and seek to map a secure future in Costa Rica, the *patria* – that is, the home, a sacred place, and one which is accepting of this integral part of its heritage. The book ends with a short bibliography which includes one-and-a-half pages of primary sources. Given Mosby's initial commentary on the loss of much indigenous writing, as well as the erasure of Afro-Costa Ricans from the annals of national history, scholars of Afro-Hispanic literature will agree that it is tremendous to have this documented source readily available.

Afro-Costa Ricans still have much to do to affirm their "Costa-Ricanness," Mosby concludes in "Becoming Costa Rican." But if her intention in this

book is to ensure that the “navel strings” (creole for “umbilical cords”) of Afro-Costa Ricans remain firmly rooted in the community, to acknowledge their presence, and to reaffirm Afro-Costa Rican identity, this seminal study is a success.

Carnival and the Formation of a Caribbean Transnation. PHILIP W. SCHER. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003. xvi + 215 pp. (Cloth US\$ 55.00)

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One of the most notable developments in the Trinidadian pre-Lenten Carnival in recent decades is the re-creation of the event in the cities of the Anglophone Caribbean diaspora, such as New York, London, Toronto, and Miami. At these transplanted festivals held during the warmer months of the year, one can join a masquerade band, listen to calypsonians and steel bands, and generally “lime” (hang out) with friends and relatives in a manner similar to Carnival practices in Trinidad itself. Though many scholars and other observers have written about diasporic Carnivals, Philip Scher’s book is one of the first full-length publications on the phenomenon. Scher suggests that “Carnival has become a central symbol in the formation of a Trinidadian *transnation*” (p. 1), with “transnation” defined as a population of migrants who imagine themselves as a collectivity with a distinct history and culture, in ongoing interaction with a home nation-state. In this study, the Trinidadian transnation is examined through a dual-site ethnography of Carnival in Trinidad and Brooklyn.

In the course of the book, Scher moves back and forth between Trinidad and Brooklyn to highlight the transnational circulation of specific Carnival practices and ideas about the event. He begins with a brief history of Carnival in Trinidad, with a focus on middle-class nationalist control and commodification of the festival through staged competitions during the twentieth century. He then examines Trinidadian migration to New York; the development of Carnival in Harlem in the 1920s and its relocation to Brooklyn in the 1960s; the contemporary production of costumes in the camp of Borocheete, USA (a well-known masquerade band); the relation of the costume-makers’ perceptions of Carnival to the “official” discourse on the event; and the role of Carnival as a display of Trinidadian or West Indian identity within the

arena of New York's ethnic politics. In the final part of his study, Scher investigates nationalist commodification of Carnival in contemporary Trinidad, with particular attention to two case studies: a failed international Carnival event that tried to lure tourists to Trinidad in September 1994, and a pattern, in recent years, of transnationals returning home to play traditional sailor masquerades that remind them of their youth.

Much of Scher's discussion revolves around three central arguments. First, he suggests that the Trinidadian state has objectified Carnival in a nationalist cultural discourse aimed both at unifying the diverse local population and at marketing the country at the international level. Second, for Trinidadians in New York, an objectified Carnival (re-packaged as a parade) has become the primary ethnic display event in exchange for official recognition and access to municipal goods and services. Scher describes this exchange as part of a "bureaucratic multiculturalism" in which the city's population is divided into distinct ethnic groups with identifiable cultural traits. Finally, he argues that the objectification and commodification of Carnival are interrelated with nostalgia for traditional forms, such as sailor masquerades, that are promoted as the "authentic" Trinidadian Carnival.

Although these are generally reasonable arguments, they rest on what seems to be a fairly thin ethnographic foundation. Carnival in this book occurs, for the most part, at a controlled theoretical distance. There is minimal description of the actual festival in either Trinidad or Brooklyn. One gains little sense of the creativity of the masquerades, the dynamics of performance, or the cacophony of the voices of Carnival practitioners. Scher occasionally quotes informants, but rarely at any length. It would have been helpful to hear more of the views of diverse government officials, cultural brokers, designers, and masqueraders in both locales. In the case of masqueraders, for example, what do people in camps other than Boroekte, USA have to say? How do returning transmigrant sailor masqueraders perceive their activity? What are the experiences of the large number of people who return to play the much more popular bikini-style masquerades? Why not complement comments by a group of young female masqueraders in Trinidad (discussed in a chapter on New York) with an interview with similar masqueraders in Brooklyn?

Along with a scarcity of descriptions and interviews, there are few photographs in the book, even though masquerade is a form of visual expression. Those photographs that do appear are poorly reproduced, insufficiently identified, and not interpreted. Three striking 1950s postcards of Trinidad Carnival scenes appear on the book's dust jacket; presumably they were selected in reference to Carnival nostalgia, but this is not discussed. In short, photographs seem to be an afterthought in this work, rather than a source of ethnographic information. An additional editorial shortcoming of the book is

that more than twenty author/year citations in the text have erroneous dates or are not included in the bibliography.

Nonetheless, this is a significant new study that will be of value not only to Carnival scholars but to other specialists in Caribbean popular culture, migration studies, and ethnic studies. Scher addresses a number of important issues related to transnational communities and identities, nationalist rhetoric and the commodification of cultural practices, multiculturalism and social control, and nostalgia and the construction of authenticity. Perhaps a next step in Carnival studies will be multisite ethnographies that encompass London and other cities, in an effort to develop a comparative understanding of the circulation of festive practitioners, forms, and meanings in the diaspora.

Musical Migrations: Transnationalism and Cultural Hybridity in Latin/o America, Volume 1. FRANCES R. APARICIO & CÁNIDA F. JÁQUEZ (eds.), with MARÍA ELENA CEPEDA. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. 216 pp. (Paper US\$ 26.95)

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Recent years have seen the publication of several monographs and edited volumes dealing with Latin American and, especially, Hispanic Caribbean ("Latin") musics. The essays in *Musical Migrations* consist mostly of expanded and in some cases updated versions of papers presented at a 1997 conference organized by the editors in Ann Arbor. Covering diverse aspects of Latin American musics, most of the articles engage in some fashion with the topics suggested in the title, which are also addressed more directly by the editors' preface. In the spirit of full disclosure, I should mention that I was involved as series editor with this volume when it was under contract with another press. A dispute over content led the editors of this book to withdraw it from publication; they choose not to acknowledge in their volume the considerable time and energy invested in improving the manuscript by that press's editors and outside reviewers.

The volume opens with an insightful article by Deborah Pacini-Hernández, which explores aspects of the presence, or absence, of Latin musical input in mainstream American pop music, and the uneasy and complex relation

between Latin music and the world beat phenomenon. This engaging essay, rich in both detail and interpretation, is a fitting opening to the volume. The next article, by Gema Guevara, focuses largely on Gloria Estefan's popular 1993 CD *Mi Tierra*, arguing that it presents an unrealistically whitewashed and sanitized image of Cuban music culture. I might add that in this vein, the Miami Sound Machine's video accompanying "The Rhythm's Gonna Get You" (included in the first *Routes of Rhythm* documentary video) presents a fine example of latter-day blackface minstrelsy *a lo cubano*.

The aforementioned editorial problems primarily involved Marisol Berrios-Miranda's article, "'Con Sabor a Puerto Rico': The Reception and Influence of Puerto Rican Salsa in Venezuela." Only certain portions of the article deal with the subject suggested in the title. The rest is framed as a critique of a 1994 article of mine, in which, according to Berrios-Miranda, I assert that salsa is "purely Cuban music" and give "the impression that Puerto Rican musicians have copied [i.e. from Cuba] almost the entire body of music that they identify with and claim as their own" (p. 96). These allegations are crude, dishonest, and opportunistic distortions of my article, which explicitly stresses the uniquely indigenous Puerto Rican character of *bomba*, *plena*, and *jibaro* music, and the ways in which Puerto Rican musicians have creatively rearticulated, enriched, and effectively domesticated Cuban genres like the *son*. It was my objection to this misrepresentation, and the evident refusal of the editors and the author to address it, that led the editors to withdraw their volume from that press.

We are on more scholarly ground with the subsequent essay, in which James Winders discusses the transnational dimensions of French Caribbean popular music and its interactions with Paris and Africa. In the next essay, Jorge Giovanetti, writing at the early stage of the boom of *reggaeton* (Spanish-language dance-hall reggae), offers insights and information on the cultivation of rap and reggae in Puerto Rico. In "Mambo Kings to West African Textiles," Paul Austerlitz attempts to draw parallels between Latin rhythms and African textile design patterns; the argument, although inherently speculative, is intriguing and thought-provoking.

The focus shifts southward and toward more literary topics in the next two essays. Bridget Morgan discusses attitudes toward Argentine gaucho music as reflected in José Hernández's fictional *Martín Fierro* poems, written in the 1870s. Juan Zevallos-Aguilar uses the depictions of Quechua dances in the fiction of Peruvian scholar and novelist José María Arguedas to reflect shifting attitudes toward highland Indian culture in Peru of the 1960s. In the next essay, Shannon Dudley offers original perspectives on the history of Trinidadian steel-band music, especially the cultivation of and affinities with Western classical music. Candida Jáquez then presents a concise, if not exactly ground-breaking, survey of aspects of mariachi music and its cultivation in the United States. The subsequent article, by Anthony Macías,

offers a brief but richly nuanced portrayal of the interethnic exchanges and activities of Los Angeles Chicano musicians and audiences in the 1950s and 1960s. In a final short essay, Luís A. Ramos-García offers some perspectives on Peruvian rock, focusing on the relation between foreign trends, highland *chicha*, and the local Creole cultural mainstream.

As with most edited volumes, the contents of *Musical Migrations* are somewhat diverse in focus, theme, approach, and quality; collectively, they contain much that may be of interest to students of Latin American music, in its great diversity and continual self-reinvention.

Cuban Music. MAYA ROY. London: Latin American Bureau/Princeton NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2002. ix + 246 pp. (Cloth US\$ 49.95)

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The recent deaths of singers Celia Cruz, also known as *La Guarachera de Oriente*, and Máximo Francisco Repilado Muñoz, better known as Compay Segundo in the *Buena Vista Social Club* film, point to the end of a cultural period in the history of Cuban music. Although together they represent the “commercial Golden Age” of Cuban music before the 1959 revolution, individually they represent antagonistic political views regarding the future of their Caribbean nation and their musical expressions. Until his death, Compay Segundo toured the world as a cultural ambassador of the Cuban government, while Celia Cruz joined the Miami-based Cuban exile movement becoming its spokeswoman in the popular music field. Therefore, the following question remains: apart from creating the musical genres *songo* and *timba*, what has the Cuban Revolution accomplished in terms of musical evolution?

This is precisely one of the strong points of this English edition of Maya Roy’s *Cuban Music* (translated from the French by Denise Asfar and Gabriel Asfar). Politically objective, devoid of racial and class prejudices, and written in clear and simple language, the book reviews the history of Cuban music from its sixteenth-century origins to the present, including Amerindian, African, and Spanish influences in the formation of a national Cuban music at the end of the nineteenth century. A brief look at its table of contents indicates that Roy employs a modern approach, beginning with the

social significance of music and following with brief descriptions of their musical characteristics and typical instrumentation. Her information and analysis is based on personal interviews with musicians and modern musicological and historical studies by Cuban scholars; Alejo Carpentier, Fernando Ortiz, Leonardo Acosta, María Teresa Linares are among those she cites most frequently. No wonder Juan Flores (professor at Hunter College in the City University of New York and author of many books and articles, including *From Bomba to Hip-Hop* [2000]) calls it, in the book's preface, "the best survey of Cuban music available."

The book is divided into nine chapters with a complete, up-to-date bibliography of primary sources and a selected discography of Cuban music. It also includes a handy glossary of terms.

Roy establishes her theoretical framework in the introduction. The study of Cuban music evolves from the study of the general history of the island, "a history marked by colonization, the almost complete eradication of its indigenous peoples and slavery." The next eight chapters are dedicated to the description of the different musical genres, styles, and forms, their typical instrumentation, and their musical history, always rooted on the historical, economic, political, and cultural history of Cuba. These are: ritual music, *rumba*, *punto y tonadas*, *danzon*, three variants of The Song (*trova*, *bolero*, and "Feeling"), and the national music known internationally as *son*, which has spread to the whole Caribbean region. The important influence of French-Haitian music in the formation of national forms and the development of the famous rhythmic pattern that identified the Cuban national forms known by specialists as the *cinquillo cubano* are also included. Chapter 8 is dedicated to a description of the history of music in Cuba since the 1959 revolution and the emergence of two new musical forms: *songo* and *timba*. It also contains an excellent description and an objective analysis of the present Cuban government's policies regarding all aspects of musical phenomena (creation, production, and distribution) and its continuous support of popular and classical music research and education. The last chapter deals with the disjunction of two traditions in Cuban music: music before the Revolution, exemplified by the Buena Vista Social Club, and music after the Revolution, mainly *songo* and *timba*. Roy concludes in a conciliatory tone:

it is becoming clear that the call for reconciliation between Cubans on the island and those outside, which is clearly transmitted through the music, is in fact being heard. For music, no matter where it originates, has neither borders nor color, as long as it is good music and comes from the heart – and this, without question, is true of the vast majority of Cuban musical expressions. (p. 204)

We have to thank the Office of the French Ministry of Culture and Communications and the Latin American Bureau in England for sponsoring

the translation of this excellent book. I would also recommend a Spanish translation of the book for the benefit of Hispanophone scholars, students, and music lovers.

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The Story of Papiamentu: A Study in Slavery and Language. GARY C. FOUSE. Lanham MD: University Press of America, 2002. x + 261 pp. (Paper US\$ 35.00)

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“I should mention at the outset, that this is not a linguistic presentation of Papiamentu. I do not intend to solve the mystery of Papiamentu’s origins, nor present the linguistic science of the language ... What I intend to do in this work is to present a historical account of this language which will continue to the present day” (p. 2). This is a worthwhile undertaking since for most creole languages we still lack systematic investigations of the sociocultural matrices in which they emerged and developed. To date we only have studies for a handful of creole languages – e.g., Le Page (1960) on Jamaican, Rens (1953) and Arends (1995) on Sranan, and Keesing (1988) on Melanesian Pidgin English. Studies that explore the extralinguistic history of individual creoles are, however, of great value. They provide important clues about the linguistic inputs to the formation of individual creoles, the languages that influenced them throughout their history, and their relative impact, respectively. Moreover, they give insights into the processes of change, for example internally motivated and contact-induced change, that played a role in their emergence and development. Finally, the results from a significant number of such studies are vital for conclusively establishing the nature of creolization or creole formation, its alleged uniqueness, and its relationship to other processes of change.

Unfortunately, Fouse's study does not bear on any of these aspects. In fact, the book does not provide a systematic account of the extralinguistic history of Papiamentu nor does it critically assess previous studies. It is essentially an accumulation of facts that more or less relate to Papiamentu and its speakers. The study is divided into four parts entitled "Language," "Slavery," "Development," and "Present and Future."

The first part discusses the origin of the term *pidgin* and briefly mentions its relationship to the term *creole* – an evolved pidgin. The first chapter presents in a highly simplistic manner the conditions in which creoles allegedly emerged and two somewhat outdated theories of creole formation, and ends with a brief and unsystematic account of the field of creole studies and the social status of creoles. In the second chapter, Fouse mentions a few things about tense and aspect in Papiamentu and the plural marker, and lists terms for numbers, the days of the week, and the months of the year. The chapter ends with a brief and little-informative discussion of the origin of Papiamentu's vocabulary.

Part Two includes five chapters. Chapter 3 provides a brief history of slavery and of the slaving activities of the Portuguese and the Spanish. Chapter 4 discusses how the Spanish discovered Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba. Chapter 5 looks at the emergence of the Dutch state and its activities in the Caribbean, South America, and West Africa. Chapter 6 discusses the development of slavery on Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba, and briefly presents the population groups that came to those islands (e.g., Sephardic Jews), those that newly emerged on them, particularly on Curaçao (e.g., Mestizos), and their relative numerical impact. The last part discusses the formation of surnames among the former slaves after the abolition of slavery, the Dutch disinterest in teaching their language to the free and freed slaves, and the dominance of Papiamentu among the Antillean-born Europeans. Chapter 7 explores the slave revolts that took place on the three islands.

Part Three deals with the development of Papiamentu. Chapter 8 uncritically recapitulates what other people have advanced about the origin and formation of Papiamentu and its relationship to other Spanish and Portuguese-lexified creoles. Chapter 9 discusses the origin, development, and acculturation of the Sephardic community on the three islands. Chapter 10 deals with the role of the Catholic Church and several prominent clergy in promoting Papiamentu. Chapter 11 discusses the relative role of Dutch and Papiamentu in the Antillean communities. Fouse argues that despite efforts to increase the use of Dutch since the turn of the twentieth century, Papiamentu is still the main language of the population. Chapter 12 briefly discusses the oral tradition of the islands, their possible West African roots, and efforts to preserve it (in writing). Chapter 13, "The Written Word," presents a classification of writings in Papiamentu, and enumerates all the prominent writers from the Dutch Antilles and their achievements. Chapter 14 reviews the

debate surrounding the standardization of Papiamentu and explains the term "language planning."

Part Four deals with Papiamentu today in the Netherlands and in the Caribbean. Fouse argues that while the language is under threat in the Netherlands despite efforts to help preserve it, it is gaining in importance in the Antilles.

Overall, the study does not add anything to our knowledge about the history of Papiamentu. It is hardly worthy of serious attention.

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Creole Formation as Language Contact: The Case of the Suriname Creoles.

BETTINA MIGGE. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003. xii + 151 pp. (Cloth US\$ 85.00)

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For all the effort that went into it, this book is a sign of a field in eclipse.

Migge presents an account of the genesis of what is usually known as Ndyuka Creole in Suriname (which she terms Eastern Maroon Creole [EMC], referring to Ndyuka and three close dialects). She proposes EMC as a compro-

mise between Gbe varieties of the West African coast and English, in chapters addressing sociohistory and contributions from the languages in contact.

With sincere regret, an honest assessment is that this book is hopelessly incomplete as a work of academic scholarship. Over the past ten years a body of work has appeared arguing that the Suriname creoles have too many highly idiosyncratic parallels to other English-based creoles of the Caribbean for it to be plausible that they emerged in Suriname itself. Rather, all evidence suggests that an "Ur-creole" was born in the Caribbean or possibly on the West African coast.

As it happens, I myself authored most of this work. However, my objection here is not that Migge does not concur with my arguments. The problem is that she does not seriously address them at all. After a single sentence stating that the grammatical features I adduce "are not sufficiently close to rule out separate developments in each or in several of the varieties," (p. 3) she never again even broaches my own work or that of Ian Hancock and Philip Baker in this vein.

I write this not out of a petty sense of having been slighted; I would have the same complaint if the neglected work had been written by another scholar. The issue is that my account of the relationship between other creoles and those of Suriname has been approved by peer referees in several journals as well as a book (McWhorter 2000), and has elicited no systematic rebuttals after a decade. As such, basic standards of scholarly argument require that Migge give a sustained attempt to refute my argument, such as a careful account as to why the features I refer to are not idiosyncratic (which, I might submit, would be very difficult). Without this, the monograph falls short of the fundamental goal of scholarly inquiry, which is to sift through competing hypotheses in a quest for new knowledge. If the scholar feels that a competing account is mistaken, she is responsible for explaining precisely why. No Algonquianist or psycholinguist taken seriously addresses their topic without close engagement with pertinent work by others.

But even within the confines of its own argument, this book relies on ad hoc arguments to a degree that would not pass muster in fields currently more robust than creole studies. Confronted with behavioral discrepancies between certain copular morphemes in EMC and Gbe, Migge's substratist paradigm leads her into a tortuous, unfalsifiable explanation, which also ignores an alternate explanation appealing to cross-linguistic parallels and historical documentation that I have presented in many publications. She guesses that EMC retains a case distinction in third person singular pronouns (*a*, *en*) because the creole's creators happened to incorporate these items at the same time, after which neither item was in a position to edge out the other one. But this is based on no systematic conception of language contact, and hardly explains why the same people could not have heard both *I* and *me* at the same time and retained them. Surely a more explanatory account, such

as the special frequency of the third person in spoken language, might be germane here.

In another unconstrained argument, Migge supposes that EMC lacks English copular morphemes because these are often contracted in speech. The point seems reasonable at first glance, but a hypothesis like this must be tested with a broader view of creoles. Copular morphemes are much more salient in French (*est* and *sont*, for example, are not contracted), and yet French creoles regularly omit them (or in the case of *est*, vastly abbreviate their occurrence in the grammar). This case is one of many in the book that suggest a general trend toward grammatical simplification in creole genesis. Yet Migge classifies EMC as an example of English undergoing mere interference from Gbe, along the lines of the way Thomason and Kaufman (1988) classify languages like Romanian under influence from Slavic.

But Thomason and Kaufman classify deep creoles as a different kind of contact altogether, marked by a sharp interruption in transmission. Migge gives no reason for her revision of their taxonomy. However, one surmises that currents in the field asserting that creoles are unbroken descendants of their lexifiers and in no way simpler than them has played some part in her classification. Treating EMC as the result of the same contact process that produced Ethio-Semitic under Cushitic influence is more politically correct in today's creole studies climate. But as Migge herself shows in addressing the low degree of allomorphy in EMC pronouns, it is plain to any analyst that simplification played a vastly larger role in plantation Suriname than in Romania or Ethiopia. Migge leaves unaddressed why this difference nevertheless allows treating all three situations as akin, which weakens the monograph as a meaningful contribution to the general investigation of language contact.

For a work on language change and contact, the book makes oddly sparse reference to cross-linguistic data for parallels. Migge does not refer to cases such as Romanian or Amharic herself, and largely restricts her addresses of diachronic principles to brief examples from textbooks such as Hopper and Traugott (1993) and Harris and Campbell (1995).

The book began as a Master's thesis, a stage at which we do not expect full command of data and argumentational rigor. However, one would expect that in turning the thesis into a book, Migge would have revised it to thoroughly address the pertinent literature that has appeared over the years and sharpen its arguments in response to feedback. That has not happened here.

Over the almost twenty years of the Creole Language Library series, of which this book is the latest entry, there has been a palpable decrease in urgency, suggesting that more than a few creolists have actually come to subscribe to the proposition that there is no reason to study creoles as a type of language. The general sense one gets from this book is that no one concerned, including the people who vetted the manuscript for publication, had a genuine curiosity about the subject.

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